

My Everything

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My Everything

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Summary

Everyone assumes that James Potter is infatuated with Lily Evans and that he hates Severus Snape.

They assume wrong

Notes

Apologies, spelling, grammar and OOCness

Disclaimer: I do not own Harry Potter or any of its characters

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Chapter 1

It was creepy, yes it was James knew that but he couldn't help himself.

The raven haired wizard rushed up to the dorm room he shared with his friends and checked that no one was in there with him before closing it with a slam. He rushed over to his side of the room and got on the bed, closing the curtains as quickly as possible before casting a privacy charm around himself. After all of this was done he took a deep breath and slowly reached into the inner pocket of his robes to pull out a scarf. It was grey and green, old and faded with dozens of little bobbles scattered over it, but James didn't really care much for what it looked like, what he cared about was the smell.

James held the scarf in his hands for a moment; letting his fingertips run over the wool material almost like he was marveling at its wondrous texture and hesitated before he brought the material up to his nose and took a deep breath, causing a shiver to run down his spine, since it smelled so distinctly of him.

Severus.

It wasn't as difficult as he thought it would be getting a piece of the Slytherin's clothing. All he had to do was wait until class ended just before lunch. With the halls being so crowded no one really noticed when they were bumped into or brushed up against so all James had to do was wait for his chance to discreetly slip by and grab the end of the Slytherin's scarf and slip it off his neck. Severus felt the disturbance of course and quickly realized that his scarf was missing but James moved even quicker, slipping into the dense crowd before Severus could catch sight of him and he got away.

James moaned as he kept the woolen material pressed against his face, reveling at the scent on the scarf as he felt his chest warm and his head feel just a little bit lighter.

Again it was creepy but James couldn't help himself.

It was all Sirius' fault.

You see James Potter has been-for lack of a better word-silently pining after Severus Snape for the past three years. He isn't entirely sure when his infatuation with the raven haired Slytherin started exactly, he just knows that it's been getting worse with every year that passed. But he hid it well so well that the entire school, including his best friends, was under the impression that he hated Severus Snape but was hopelessly in love with his best friend Lily Evans and was therefore silently pining after her.

A condition that Sirius decided needed to be remedied with immediate effect.

So, for the first time since he first arrived at Hogwarts Sirius willingly went to the library to do some research on ways to relieve his friend of his situation. Eventually somehow Sirius found himself in the restricted section of the library where he found a very helpful looking book on spells and charms. From there on he stumbled on charm that seemed to be exactly what he needed to help his best friend out.

See Sirius had thought the spell was a charm that could be used to reveal emotional connections, like whether or not someone had feelings for someone else. In other words whether or not Lily Evans really liked James and was just pretending that she found him to be the most insufferable

creature on the face of this earth.

Unfortunately Sirius was only partly right.

Not only was Sirius partially wrong but his execution of the spell was absolutely atrocious and the spell that was meant to hit Lily Evans ended up hitting his best mate instead, which probably wouldn't be so bad since the entire school already knew of James' affections for the redheaded girl. But again, Sirius was only partly correct in his assumptions on exactly what the spell he'd found in a mysterious book in the restricted section of the library and decided to use without any real practice actually did.

Along with his assumptions on exactly who it was that James fancied.

At first nothing happened.

They were sitting in class at the time, double potions with Slytherin. James was sitting next to Moony a few seats ahead of him and Peter just a few seats behind where Evans sat in her usual spot beside Snape.

At first nothing happened.

Sirius was partly relieved since that meant that his poor aim hadn't harmed his best friend in some way and partly annoyed since he'd wanted to see exactly what kind of affect the spell would have.

Class went by as normally as usual without any mishaps or accidents and after a while Sirius started to forget about the spell he'd cast when the period eventually ended and he suddenly noticed something... odd.

During the class, Slughorn had written a list of questions down on the board, mostly just revision questions on various potions ingredients, their uses and possible after effects when used or prepared incorrectly. They were supposed to answer the questions on a piece of parchment before handing it in at the front of the class at the end of the period. As always Evans and Snape finished first and spent the rest of the class passing notes while the Marauders finished last. Sirius was just putting on the last touches on his assignment when he looked up to see if James and Remus had finished yet.

They had.

Snape and Evans had handed in their parchments and Evans stood chatting with Snape as he packed up his things when Prongs and Moony got up to hand in their assignments as well. James walked by behind Snape only to pause for a moment. Sirius paused as well, thinking that James was about to pull some kind of prank on the greasy Slytherin bat, maybe shove him into the table, slip a dung bomb in his bag or maybe he was going to use some kind of hex.

Sirius watched in anticipation only to frown in confusion when James seemed to lean in towards Snape for a moment, seeming to take a deep breath of his hair as he shut his eyes when Evans asked him if he was lost and Snape quickly spun around to face the other. James flushed and mumbled out something intelligible before stalking off to the front of the class, leaving everyone who saw the scene completely confused.

Sirius may have forgotten the incident and thought nothing of it if it weren't for what happened next. They were having lunch in the Great Hall, Wormtail had detention at the time. They were talking animatedly about Quidditch practice and the next game against Ravenclaw when they just happened to hear Evans make a comment about the fact that she didn't see Snape at the Slytherin

table before complaining about how they were supposed to study together after lunch and he didn't seem to be anywhere in sight. One of her friends, Alice seemed to giggle as she suggested that maybe Snape was spending time with Malfoy again when James asked the girl exactly how she knew that.

"What's it to you Potter?" Lily asked with her eyes narrowed down in suspicion and James paused before he answered, "Nothing, just curious is all."

"Really? Since when are you curious about anything that Severus does?"

"Oh calm down Lil's it was just a question." Emily, another one of Evans' friends who had a horribly obvious crush on James, said as she twirled a lock of her golden blonde hair around her finger as she looked up at James and spoke, "It was just a guess, Snape's been spending a lot of time with Malfoy lately and Malfoy's been giving him all sorts of gifts."

"Gifts?"

"Haven't you noticed? The new robes, brand new quills and ink pots not to mention how Malfoy always seems to be hanging around Snape on Hogsmeade weekends."

Sirius gave a snort at that, "I hardly believe anything would be going on between them, Malfoy has a contract with Narcissa. Even an arrogant prat like him has some standards, I doubt he'd choose a toad like Snivellus over her."

James growled and Sirius looked over to find his friend glaring at him and he was about to ask what was wrong when Lily drew his attention first wearing a slightly less intense glare than his friend.

"Don't call him that."

"It was just an observation." Alice said with a roll of her eyes before giving a shrug, "Besides Snape doesn't look that bad."

Sirius gaped, "Excuse me?"

"Oh come off it Black." Evans said as she looked back down to her Shepard's pie. "If you weren't such a narrow-minded troll you might have noticed that Severus is really starting to grow into himself."

"Right like he's growing into that gigantic nose of his."

"Sirius." James suddenly said in a warning tone.

"What?" Sirius asked when Alice gave a snort, "That gigantic nose hasn't stopped your brother from drooling all over him."

Emily giggled and Sirius glared, "Regulus would never--"

"Sure he wouldn't." Alice said with a mischievous smirk and Lily rolled her eyes as her friend continued, "Just like he doesn't stare at Snape's arse every time he walks by."

Sirius' glare got darker when Lily shook her head, "Calm down, Regulus isn't even Severus' type."

"He has a type?"

"Exactly what is Snape's type?" That question made Sirius pause to look back at his friend with a

frown one that only got worse when he saw the light dust of pink spreading across his cheeks. But no one else seemed to notice.

Lily simply shrugged as she lifted a spoonful of mash and mince into her mouth when Emily spoke, "Phillip Diggory."

Lily almost choked on her food before she hissed, "Emily!"

"What, he asked."

"You didn't have to tell him."

"Phillip Diggory?" Sirius asked with a frown, "Isn't he a chaser for Ravenclaw?"

"He's also the captain of the Quidditch team and a prefect and the winner of last year's junior thinking cap prize *and* the captain of the Ravenclaw chess team." Emily listed off easily despite the redhead's glare.

"He fancies Snape?"

"No, he doesn't and Severus doesn't like him either." Evans said clearly.

"That's not what it looked like in the library last week." Alice gave a snort as she mumbled out into her pumpkin juice while Lily rolled her eyes with a heavy sigh, "They're just friends, Severus is helping him with his potions assignments so Diggory offered to help him with transfiguration."

"Oh well that makes more sense than him actually liking that greasy bat. Although it's still hard to believe that Snape has any friends at all, at least any that aren't death eaters in the making, anyway." Lily glared at Sirius when Remus suddenly spoke, "I think Snape looks alright."

Emily giggled and Sirius gaped at his friend before letting out a groan, "Oh no, Moony please don't start. If you get a crush on Snape I'll never forgive you."

Remus shrugged, "I'm just saying."

"Why do you care who Snape fancies anyway Black?" Alice asked with an arched brow and Sirius sputtered for a moment before he spoke, "I don't, it's just hard to believe that anyone would actually want him, isn't bestiality illegal?"

Remus gave a small smirk speaking low enough for only Sirius to hear, "Well, you're one to talk." And the animagus started to flush just as Emily spoke again. "I don't know about bestiality but I bet Diggory would love to get Snape down on all fours."

Lily flushed a horrible dark red while Alice let out a loud hearty laugh, Sirius made a gagging sound and Remus shook his head despite the light blush he wore because of the comment when James suddenly snapped.

"Oh all of you can just sod off!" James got up and immediately stormed out of the hall causing the entire table and some of those sitting at the next one to stare at him in surprise when Alice spoke.

"What's his problem?"

The last event came just after Quidditch practice. They had just finished getting dressed and were making their way from the locker rooms back to the tower where Remus and Peter would probably be waiting, when they heard someone talking in the corridor that led to the Ravenclaw changing

room. Ravenclaw usually had practice after Gryffindor on Wednesdays so it wasn't all that surprising to run into the other team every now and then. What was surprising was the conversation they overheard between what sounded like Diggory and his mates.

"...go tonight, I'm studying with Snape."

One of his friends sighed, "You're still hanging around him? I thought you already finished with the assignment."

"Ages ago, but Severus doesn't need to know that."

"I can't believe you're ditching us to spend time with Snape. You can't be this desperate for a shag mate." Sirius' eyes went wide from his spot beside the wall near the corridor while James glared as the animagus whispered, "No way."

"You realize that there are plenty of skirts in this school for you to chase right?"

"But Severus isn't like the other skirts in this school, is he?"

"But--"

"Boys, boys, boys." Diggory said in mock exasperation, "How many times do I have to tell you; a pretty package might be nice to look at but what's the point if there isn't any substance to it?"

"And exactly what kind of substance does Snape have?"

"He's intelligent, witty with just the right amount of bark to his bite more than ample bite. I couldn't find a more perfect match if I tried."

"He's not much to look at though."

"They all look good from behind, mate." Diggory's friends laughed and Sirius gagged, "Besides, you know what they say about the quiet ones."

One gave a snort, "That's just a myth."

"Well, I'm studying with Severus again next Friday night, that's a good a time as any to find out for sure."

Another laugh, they were close. Sirius immediately moved to duck away before they were seen only for James to stay right where he was.

"Prongs!"

The next moment Diggory appeared with his friends but there was only a moment for shock when James suddenly grabbed him by the collar of his shirt and turned around to slam him into a wall.

The brunette gasped only to glare at the teen in front of him who had shoved him firmly against the wall. Diggory was a good six inches taller than the raven-haired wizard but that didn't seem to make much of a difference to James as he swiftly reached into his robes and snatched out his wand to aim at the older teens throat.

"Potter? What the hell do you think you're--"

"Stay away from him."

“What?” Diggory asked staring incredulously at the younger teen when his friends stepped forward. “Let him go Potter.”

“If you touch him I swear, I’ll kill you.”

“James!” Sirius suddenly snapped grabbing a hold of his best friend’s arm which seemed to bring James back and the Gryffindor chaser suddenly let go and stepped back staring at his hands with wide eyes when he just as suddenly turned away and rushed down the hall.

“What the hell was that all about?”

One of the Ravenclaws asked but Sirius didn’t stay to find out which as he went after his friend and found him locked in the bathroom in their dorm in one of the toilet stalls.

“What the hell is wrong with me? This can’t be happening, this can’t be happening.” Sirius could hear his friend mutter over and over again from the stall at the end of the room, Remus gave him a look as they approached the door until.

“James, are you alright?”

“I don’t understand, sweet Merlin what the hell?!”

“James,” Sirius started as he stared at the door curiously, “What on earth was that about? You just went absolutely mental on Diggory for no reason.”

“He did what?”

Sirius let out a heavy sigh, “We were walking back from Quidditch practice right and everything was fine, but then we ran into Diggory and his mates and James lost it.”

“Lost it how?”

“He threatened to kill him.”

Remus’ eyes went wide, “He did what? What on earth for?”

“I don’t know!” Sirius said with a sigh of exasperation, “They weren’t even doing anything, Diggory was just bragging to his friends about his dates with Snape.”

“Dates?” Remus paused, “I thought Lily said they were just friends.”

“Yeah well from the sounds of it Diggory plans on changing that very soon.” Sirius said with a cringe and for a moment it seemed that they’d completely forgotten their friend in the bathroom stall whose confusing mumbles had turned into low growls.

“I can’t believe that someone would actually want to have Snape at all. You should have heard him Moony, going on and on about shagging that greasy git.” The Animagus shook his head, “All the birds in this school and he chooses the ugliest snake here. I mean honestly, if he really does prefer blokes then he could have had a go at someone that wasn’t completely evil or at least go after someone that doesn’t look like they’ve never seen the inside of a bath before-“

Remus and Sirius both gasped at the exact same time when the bathroom stall suddenly flew open and James lunged at the animagus, grabbing a hold of the front of Sirius’ robes to drag him over and slam him against the nearest wall.

“OW! What the he-“

“Take it back.” James hissed and Sirius started to squirm, “What-James what the hell is wrong with you?!”

“I said take it back!”

Sirius paused just then as he stared into his friends eyes. They were dark and intense, burning with rage while the chaser’s skin had flushed and his body was tight with tension. He pushed Sirius into the wall a little more and the animagus blinked in surprise since the pressure on his chest was making it hard to breathe.

Has James always been this strong?

“Take it back right now.” James’ voice was lower, darker with the promise of something that Sirius didn’t even want to attempt to understand right at that moment.

Still the animagus swallowed hard and didn’t break his gaze as he spoke, “Take back what?”

“What you said.”

“About what?”

“AH!” Sirius gasped before yelping in pain when he was suddenly pulled away from the wall only to be slammed back into it as James screamed, “You know what!”

Sirius just stared back at him like he was insane, “No I don’t you fucking loon now let me go!”

A few feet away Remus was watching the entire interaction; watching as the two friends bickered back and forth, with James looking close to murder and Sirius looking as confused as he probably felt. It didn’t make a lot of sense, James was behaving so oddly but really, his behavior has been off all day. Ever since double potions to be precise. Unfortunately Remus couldn’t for a moment understand what was wrong.

James’ first outburst came when they were in the great hall for lunch and they ended up talking about Snape. He was constantly watching the doors during each class and fidgeting throughout all of them, despite the fact that he normally liked his other classes since they didn’t have to share them in the company of Slytherin. He kept glaring at Malfoy and some of the other Slytherin students, which isn’t really all that odd but James has never been this focused on the Slytherins either. Then, according to Sirius, he had another outburst when he had another after Quidditch when Diggory talked about Snape. And now he looks like he’s having some trouble not killing Sirius for talking about-...

No.

Remus almost took a step back at the thought but it kept coming back to him. But-but it couldn’t be.

Could it?

“Now!”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about!”

Remus’ head gave a tilt to the side and his eyebrows pulled into a tight line.

No way.

But-

“James?” The werewolf started as he tried to get his best friends attention, earning nothing more than a slight twitch as James continued to glare at Sirius and Sirius kept struggling to get away.

“How the hell are you this strong anyway?!”

“James.” Remus said more firmly only to be ignored again, so he took a step forward, swallowing hard when an idea suddenly came to mind.

But it couldn't be, right?

“James, Severus is a dirty slag.”

It's ridiculous but, James' reaction was immediate.

He dropped one friend onto the cold stone floor in favor of grabbing the other and Remus gasped as he was suddenly shoved against a bathroom stall, but he didn't struggle just stared at his best friend's rage filled eyes in disbelief.

“Prongs are you insane?! Let him go!” Sirius said once he collected himself and rushed up to his feet while an odd little smile spread over the werewolf's lips that made him stop in his tracks.

“Moony?”

“Take it back.” James hissed and Remus' smile twisted a little as he spoke, “James... do you fancy Snape?”

James froze and Sirius gaped, “What?! Have you both gone insane?!”

James suddenly blushed and his eyes went wide as he almost pulled back.

“James? Do you fancy Snape?”

The hazel eyed wizard let him go completely and took a step back, before he started biting his lip so hard that it started to bleed. Sirius' eyes went wide.

“Ja-“

“Yes!” James suddenly yelled out before his eyes went even wider than before and he quickly slapped a hand over his own mouth.

“You what?” Sirius said quietly as his shoulders slumped and he stared at his best friend in complete shock, while Remus stared as well, “You do don't you? Fancy him.”

James shook his head so hard for a moment Remus feared that he might hurt himself, but he pushed on anyway, “Then why do you care if he's with Diggory? Why do you care if he spends time with Malfoy? If you don't like him then why do you care who he shags-”

“Because he's mine! No one should touch him but me!” James suddenly screamed out as his hands went down to his sides and he almost seemed to rush at Remus again only to freeze when the werewolf spoke.

“Since when?”

Sirius just stared at the two in confusion while James stepped back, Remus stepped forward and spoke again.

“How long have you liked Snape James?”

“Since the first day on the train!” James blurted out and Sirius’ eyes went wide.

“No way. Will someone please tell me what the hell is going on?”

“He was just so...” James let out a sigh, looking miserable as he stepped back and leaned back against the wall beside one of the stalls. The raven haired teen looked down at his hands, “He looked so small and helpless, miserable and poor but then he looked me right in the eye and insulted me. That little shit had the nerve to say that Slytherin was better than Gryffindor. The house of my ancestors-“

“What does that have to do with-“ Sirius interrupted before Remus hushed him, “Sirius let him finish.”

“When we were sorted I hoped, I wanted him to be sorted into Gryffindor, just so I could spite him. I thought if he was with us he wouldn’t be so arrogant he’d realize that he was wrong, but then he got sorted into Slytherin and those first few days he just... He ignored me like I was nothing.” James said with his voice laced in disbelief, “Me! My family has more gold than his could ever hope to have, I’m handsome and talented-no one in our school is a better flier than I am. I’m the best chaser Gryffindor’s ever had but no all he cared about was Evans and what she was doing and how she looked. It’s like I didn’t even exist. And then you messed up and almost got him killed.” James said gesturing towards Sirius and the wizard tensed while Remus pulled back, “I’ve never been more afraid before in my life. I was terrified. If anything had happened to him I never would’ve forgiven myself and then,”

James’ expression twisted in thought and then a smile started spreading over his lips, “After we made it out of the shack we made it to the lake and I realized that, he was clinging to me. It was like he needed me, like he needed me to be safe. Holding me tight and I could feel his heart beating right up against my chest. I whispered in his ear, I told him that he was safe that I’d never let anything hurt him ever again and he held on even tighter, but I don’t think he even knew what he was doing. You should’ve seen what he was like after Dumbledore called us to his office.” James’ eyebrows pulled together in a tight line, “It’s like he hated me more than before. He wouldn’t even look in my direction and when he did his eyes were so empty.”

“James-“

“Oh but Malfoy, Severus had plenty of time for Malfoy and his minions. Just letting that arrogant twat touch him whenever he wanted,” James said when he suddenly got up and started pacing, Remus and Sirius both stepped back to give him more room all while they gaped at their friend. “And then there was Avery and Rosier and your bloody brother and now it’s Diggory. Diggory! When did that even happen?! I’ve been watching Severus for months and I never saw that snarky pretty boy go near him and now they’re studying together?! Of course, that’s all going to come to an end because that infuriatingly oblivious slimy snake is so blind; he doesn’t know when someone’s trying to shag him. I’ve been trying to get his attention for months and nothing! Fucking nothing! At least Diggory’s managed to get him to agree to study with him but me? Of course, not me. The stupid prat can’t stand me!”

Sirius was gaping, Remus’ lips twitched up into a smile.

“He’s so- I’ve never met anyone so frustrating before in my life! And those books! Those dark books he insists on reading. No matter how many of them I ruin he insists on reading them. The dark arts are evil, everyone knows that but no matter what I do Severus won’t listen! He’s so fascinated by it all, I just I can’t understand why he won’t listen to me and and at the same time I-“

James suddenly stopped and leaned back against the nearest wall, sliding down until he was sitting flat on his ass as he sighed. "I want him so badly... I don't know what to do."

"Oh, sweet Merlin." That's about all that Sirius could think to say in that moment as he continued to gape at his friend. Remus on the other hand wasn't as immobile.

The werewolf stepped forward and stopped in front of his friend with a tilt of his head.

"While I can't say I'm not surprised by your confession James, I'm not sure I understand what brought it on. If you've been feeling this for so long why suddenly admit it now?"

James let out a heavy sigh as he threw his hands up in frustration.

"I don't know! I usually have it under control, but today I suddenly just felt so... when we were in potions I suddenly felt this overwhelming need to just get down on my knees in front of him and beg him to forgive and accept me. To let me touch him or just to say my name once." James stared up at his friend incredulously, "Can you believe that? Me beg Snape to do anything?! But I wanted to touch him so badly and then you all wouldn't stop talking about him shagging other blokes--"

"I never said Snape was shagging anyone."

"That's not the point Moony. I don't know what's wrong with me. I don't understand what's going on."

The werewolf looked away for a brief moment with his hands folded over his chest, "And this started when we were in potions?"

"Yes."

"Maybe Slughorn left some potions out during class, but then we all would've been affected by it so maybe something else."

And then suddenly Sirius let out a sharp gasp and took a step back.

Remus and James both looked back at him and frowned when they found their best friend had paled considerably. The werewolf frowned.

"Sirius, what's wrong?"

Sirius swallowed hard, "I-uhm..."

Remus was still frowning, James' eyes narrowed ever so slightly at the look on his friend's face when something in his head suddenly just clicked and he glared hard.

"You did this didn't you?"

Remus looked back to James, "Did what?"

"I swear I didn't mean for this to happen." Sirius said raising his hands in a placating manner. Remus' eyes went wide-

"What did you do?"

Sirius took a deep breath, "I can explain."

He did explain. Sirius explained about the spell and the book and his plan to help James finally get

the girl of his dreams after which James immediately lunged out in an attempt to kill him.

“You idiot!” James said while Remus tried his hardest to keep his friend restrained. Sirius kept back, “Are you insane?!”

“Look, I’m sorry I didn’t know the spell would do that.”

“And yet you used it anyway! Merlin this is almost as bad as when you sent Severus to the bleeding shack.” Sirius tensed considerably at that and Remus tugged James back.

“ALRIGHT CALM DOWN!” The werewolf huffed, James finally stopped moving and Remus slowly let him go. “Getting pissed and trying to murder Sirius isn’t going to fix anything.” The werewolf let out a sigh as he turned to the Animagus. “Sirius, do you still have the book?”

“It’s in the library.”

“We’ll have to go have a look.”

They went to the library, got the book and spent most of dinner huddled together in the forbidden section with James looking close to murder while Sirius kept apologizing profusely until-

“It looks like the only way to break the spell is for you to confess.”

James frowned, “Confess what?”

“You have to tell Snape how you feel about him James.”

“Oh, absolutely not.”

“You don’t have a choice. According to this you have to tell him, if you don’t it’ll get worse.”

James let out a sigh of frustration, “How could this possibly get any worse?”

“I don’t know, it doesn’t say but I’d rather not tempt fate.” Remus sighed, “All you have to do is tell him how you feel, and the spell will break.”

“I can’t, I mean, what would I even say? How would Snape react? He’d probably think it was some sort of prank.”

“Wouldn’t that be a good thing?” Sirius suddenly said from his spot on the floor propped up against a shelf, “The spell will break, and he’ll never know that you actually like him... for some insane reason.” Sirius said that last part quietly, James glared at him but couldn’t help but let out a sigh.

“Yeah, I guess you’re right.”

“No.”

“What?”

Remus frowned eyes narrowed down at the book in his hands, “It says here he has to acknowledge your feelings. He has to take it seriously or else it won’t count as a confession.”

“Great! And how am I supposed to do that?! He hates me, he’ll never believe that I’m in love with him.”

“Well, we’ll just have to convince him. We don’t really have a choice in the matter. In two months, the spell will reach its maturity. The book doesn’t say what will happen when it does but the way you’ve been behaving today, I have a feeling it won’t be anything good.” Remus said with finality as he shut the book and got up off the floor, “We need to think of a plan, for now no more pranks from either of you and James you’ll need to stay away from him.”

The wizard’s eyes went wide, “I... but-“

“You threatened to kill someone today because they showed an interest in Snape.”

“He’s trying to get into Severus’ pants!”

Remus held up his hand, “I don’t even want to think about what’ll happen if Snape insults you. Just stay away until we think of a plan.”

They eventually did come up with a plan. They’d start slowly, James first at least getting on semi civil terms with the Slytherin and then slowly working his way up to a confession.

The plan was failing.

Its just. Severus was just so snarky and rude and brilliant, and his eyes were just so annoyingly endless. James tried to stay away; he couldn’t. He tried being civil; he couldn’t its like he just couldn’t control himself. There was just so much he wanted to say and do, and Snape was just so infuriatingly *Snape*.

So, James thought of a plan B.

Plan B entailed subtly wooing Snape without Snape realizing that James was the one wooing him and once enough time has passed, he’d reveal himself and by then Severus would be so impressed he’d absolutely accept James confession and maybe, he’d maybe they could finally be together.

Its been one month and three weeks, time is running out fast. James has felt his control slip away little by little with every day that passed. He didn’t know how the spell would manifest itself once it matured but he could feel that Remus was right.

It wasn’t going to be pretty.

James pressed Severus’ scarf against his face, taking another deep breath wondering how it would feel to pull Snape close like this. To smell the scent right off his skin, kiss and touch him. the Gryffindor chaser couldn’t help but moan as he lay back against the bed.

Just a few more days, in a few days he’ll confess everything.

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

It started with a letter

Chapter Notes

A/N: Sing it with me...

My first, my last, my everything. And the answer to all my dreams. You're my sun, my moon, my guiding star. My kind of wonderful, that's what you are! I know there's only, only one like you. There's no way they could have made two. You're all I'm living for, your love I'll keep forever more. You're the first, you're the last, my everything.

Hey guys, thanks for all the reviews

Quick heads up since someone asked; I will never write a rape/non-con fic without putting up a warning for it somewhere in the tags or in the chapter notes. Personally I don't like getting surprised with sudden rape scenes so don't worry. If I do write a rape/non-con you will be warned beforehand.

Usual apologies, spelling grammar blah blah

Disclaimer: see previous chapter

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

It started with a letter.

The first time it happened, Severus didn't think anything of it.

After all it wouldn't be the first time that someone tried to humiliate him in such a twisted and underhanded way so he just ignored it.

Severus

I really like you.

- *Your secret admirer*

That's what the first note that he found in his bag said. Severus had just given a snort before crushing the piece of paper in his hands and throwing it in the nearest dustbin. Wondering exactly when his school tormentors would start coming up with some new material instead of boring him to death with all these hair brained idiotic schemes. He guessed that the marauders were probably behind the prank, being his most devoted school tormentors, he knew that they were usually behind all the pain and humiliation he was subjected to. Although this didn't seem quite like Potter

or Black's usual style of torture, so he thought that this time it might actually be someone new. Either way, Severus didn't think about it too long and soon enough he'd completely forgotten about it.

Until he sat down in the library about two days later of course. They had a charms test coming up soon and Severus needed to study, unfortunately his efforts were halted when he found yet another note nestled in his bag between the pages of his book.

Severus

I'm not sure if you got my first note, although I really hope you did. You didn't seem any different when I saw you in the courtyard a few days ago. I was hoping that it would make you smile. I've never seen you smile, except of course whenever you're with Evans but this time I wanted to be the one to do it.

It drives me mad whenever I see her with you. I can barely stand it when she holds your hand, so you can imagine how I felt when I saw her kiss your cheek two days ago. Why did you let her do it? Surely you know that she doesn't deserve you.

I can't stop thinking about you. When I see you I just want to get close so I can touch you and maybe kiss you, run my fingers through your hair. I know it's not really as greasy as everyone says, I know it smells like Wolfsbane and lavender and I think it smells absolutely lovely.

I hope you get this letter, I really do fancy you so much Severus. One day, I hope that we can be together or at least, that we can be friends.

- *Your secret admirer*

Alright so that's new.

But still, this time Severus only hesitated for a moment before tearing the note apart and throwing away the remains because none of that could possibly be true. Whoever it was leaving notes in his bag had one sick sense of humor and they obviously weren't very bright either, so Severus simply dismissed the incident just like the first one.

But then it happened again, and again and *again*.

Dozens of letters each one more detailed and personal than the last. So detailed and personal in fact they could only have come from someone that knows him, someone whose close to him, someone always watching.

Severus

You really shouldn't go wandering off to the Forbidden forest on your own. It isn't safe, you could get hurt or maybe even worse and I can't stand the idea of losing you. Although I can't deny that you are something to look at when you're out there with the moon glowing off your skin and your hair hanging over your eyes. You looked breathtaking as you sat beside the stream picking those white flowers from the base of that oak tree. I'm not sure what kind they are but they looked gorgeous against your skin.

Are you using them in a new potion? I bet you are, you've always been brilliant in potions, maybe someday I could convince you to tutor me.

- *Your secret admirer*

... what the hell?

Severus remembers going out into the forest to get potions ingredients for a project that he'd been working on but he's absolutely positive that no one saw him leave the castle walls when he did. There's no way anyone could have followed him to that spot by the stream without the Slytherin having seen them first.

So how on earth-

Severus

I don't understand what you find so fascinating about the dark arts. Its bad magic, none of it is safe and it's always used to hurt people. Like that book that you have, Morbidly Mysterious; the Wizards Guide to Dark Spells and the Myths Behind Them. None of the spells in that book do anything to actually help people. And the myths are just one story after another about people being hurt and killed in the worst ways, I don't want you reading any of that anymore but at the same time you look so happy when you're reading those types of books. You look so focused and fascinated with your eyes bright and a blush on your cheeks. I wish you'd look at me the way you look at those books.

I could make you just as happy, if you just gave me the chance.

- *Your secret admirer*

Oh, sweet Merlin.

Severus froze.

See this letter is shocking for one simple reason; *Morbidly Mysterious the Wizards Guide to Dark Spells and the Myths Behind Them*, is a book that Severus only recently managed to sneak out of the library after claiming that he needed it for a DADA assignment. He keeps it in his room, never takes it out when his dorm mates are awake and only ever reads it in bed, with his curtains closed and a privacy charm cast around him. No one other than himself and Madame Pinch knew that he had that book.

So how in the name of all things good and holy did this so called secret admirer find out about it?! Unless, his secret admirer just happened to be Madame Pinch of course and although the woman was nothing to sneeze at Severus would rather not think about one of his professors/guardians harboring romantic feelings towards him.

Oh and the letters only got worse.

So, sooo much worse.

Severus

What kind of potion are you making? I saw you at the apocathery this weekend and you bought doxy eggs, vervain, blood root and eel entrails. I noticed you eyeing the tarantula venom too but you didn't get it for some reason. I hope you were still able to make whatever it is you're making. I keep looking for those ingredients in the textbook, but I can't find it. Either way, I'm sure you managed. I can't imagine what kind of potion would need to be stirred every three hours for a whole night. I can't say I'd be willing to get up every few hours to stir a potion but it was lovely watching you sleep. Although it couldn't have been comfortable sleeping on the desk in the dungeons the way you were. It was so cold in there. I hope the heating charm I cast on you worked, I would've given you my cloak but, I'm quite certain you wouldn't have liked that.

Sometimes I hate how stubborn you are, but most of the time I love it.

- *Your secret admirer*

That was last week, and Severus did remember feeling oddly warm whenever he woke up to stir his potion but, how on earth did they find out about his trip to Hogsmeade?!

Severus

You really shouldn't spend so much time around Diggory, he isn't good for you. Surely you know of his reputation? I just don't want you getting hurt and I know for sure that Diggory will do nothing more than harm you. I hated seeing you together in the courtyard yesterday. You just sat there reading your notes while he stared. You have no idea how he looked at you, he looked at you like you were a piece of meat and I was sure he'd try to devour you any minute. It drove me insane, you have no idea how hard it was staying away and not dragging you away from him. He isn't good enough for you Severus, you deserve better.

I'm really sorry for the charm I cast on you to get wet out there, especially since its gotten so cold but I couldn't think of any other way to make sure that you two stayed apart for the rest of the day. Please forgive me

- *Your Secret admirer.*

Severus almost gasped at the memory as he sat in the library reading his next note from his secret admirer. Diggory had asked if Severus could help him with one of his potions for his NEWT level exam and Severus agreed to help him. They were going over the notes that Severus made the night before when they were both suddenly doused with an extraordinary amount of water that came out of seemingly nowhere. An incredibly brave feat considering the fact that Diggory was a prefect and could therefore get whoever cast the spell in some serious trouble. But there was no one in sight at the time so Severus suggested that they just try again the next day much to Diggory's apparent annoyance.

Severus brushed a strand of hair behind his ear with a sigh.

Phillip Diggory was a bit of a sensitive subject for him, but only because Severus couldn't for the life of him figure out exactly what it was that the older wizard wanted from him. At first Severus genuinely thought that he just wanted help with potions but then it became very clear even to him that the Ravenclaw's attentions on him had very little to do with school work.

Lily and her friends kept insisting that Diggory was after his well... you know but Severus simply couldn't understand why the older teen would want him of all people in that way. Severus is aware of what he looks like. He's aware of the fact that he has a less than pleasant personality and no one else has ever paid that kind of attention to him before not even Lily. So why on earth would he?

However, after considering the possibility of Diggory actually liking him, he considered the possibility that it might be Diggory sending him all those letters. But Diggory didn't really strike him as the type to send love letters and silently stalk someone through the halls since he seemed to have no problem just walking up to Severus and trying to touch him whenever the mood took him. Plus, the letters sort of made it clear that whoever was sending them despised the Ravenclaw.

So, then who could it be?

After the notes came gifts.

They started innocently enough.

Ink pots, quills and potions books. Then gift boxes with every manner of chocolate and candy imaginable because *"I wasn't sure what you'd like"* and then a few days later.

"I noticed that you kept the chocolate but didn't eat any of the candy"

Then he got chocolates for a while. And then he started getting potions ingredients. Expensive potions ingredients.

Tarantula venom, unicorn blood and moonstone, devil's snare roots. It was kind of lovely and Severus might have thought it to be lovely if it weren't for the letter that accompanied it.

Severus

I saw these this weekend and thought you might like to have them. I'm not at all sure what they do, but I'm sure you'll find some use for them. I was a bit disappointed that you didn't go to Hogsmeade this weekend, but I know you were busy studying in the library. I'm just glad you weren't with Diggory. He's not worthy of you Sev, none of them are. Non-one could ever love you the way that I do.

I watch you when you sleep sometimes, you always look so peaceful. You have no idea how badly I want to touch you Severus, how badly I want to kiss and hold you. Its not fair that Diggory gets to be so close to you. I hate it when you let him do that. I hate that you won't look at me the way you look at him. But I promise that's all going to change soon. I promise we'll be together. I'd do anything to have you.

- *Your secret admirer*

That, that is why the gifts sort of lost their charm.

And then came then Severus got a necklace... sort of.

To be honest the metal chain with a small silver pendant with the word forever engraved on it with tiny ruby and emerald gems, fit and looked more like a collar than a necklace.

Severus

Sometimes I feel like you're doing it on purpose. I feel like you spend time with Malfoy, Diggory and the others because you want me to be mad, like you're trying to make me jealous and punish me. You're not actually doing it on purpose right? You only spend time around them because you have to. Because Malfoy and his lackeys are in your house and Diggory refuses to leave you alone. You have no idea how insane it makes me when I see them with you, sometimes I get so angry I just want to kill them. Why don't you understand? I can't stand to see them near you. I can't stand to watch anyone touch you.

Everyday it gets harder and harder trying to control these things you make me feel. Sometimes I see you sitting in the library or walking by the lake with Evans and I just want to take you away. I want to lock you up and keep you all to myself so no one else can have you. I actually broke a cauldron yesterday when I thought of you being with anyone else but me. That's how strong my feelings for you are Severus. I just want you so badly. I can't wait to finally have you.

- *Your Secret Admirer*

A shiver ran down Snape's spine after that one but nothing, absolutely nothing could have prepared him for the last letter he got. The one he got just three days ago.

It came with a scarf. A brand-new silver and green scarf. Severus lost his own during lunch a few days ago. One moment it was there and then the next it was gone. He knew that someone must have taken it, for a moment the thought it might have been some idiotic prank. It was a new low quite frankly since he only had the one scarf and it was starting to get quite chilly being late autumn and all.

And then he got the letter and the scarf.

Severus

I got you this scarf to replace your old one. I'm sorry for taking it but its so hard being away from you. Not being able to just touch you as much as I want. It's gotten even worse since you started locking your dorm room door, I can't imagine why you'd do that. I hope you haven't been having any trouble with your housemates. If any of them even dare to touch you I swear I'll kill them. I took your scarf because I just needed something that smelled like you just to help keep me calm.

It's getting worse you see, these feelings I have for you. I needed something to feed them, so I took your scarf. I really am sorry. Hopefully this will make up for it.

Still, I don't think I can hold out any longer Severus. I want to tell you everything. I need to tell you everything, I need you to know who I am. And I know you might not accept me, I'm actually quite sure that you sort of hate me, but I hope that over the passed few months these letters and gifts were enough for me to prove how much I care about you. I want us to be together but just being friends with you would be enough.

I don't want us to just be friends, I want you to love me as much as I love you. If you'd only give me a chance I promise you won't regret it.

This is the last letter that I'm going to write you. The next time you hear from me, it'll be in person. I'm sorry I can't give you more information but we both know how stubborn you are. I don't want you getting away from me when we could be so close to being together.

I'm so excited. I can't wait to finally tell you everything.

- *Your Secret Admirer*

Severus would never admit it out loud, but he was terrified. Firstly, at the thought that his stalker had actually managed to get close enough to him to touch in broad daylight and Severus didn't notice it until it was too late. Second, was the way his secret admirer described the feelings they supposedly had for him. you know what they say about too much of a good thing. If this person really did love Severus the way they say they did, then Severus has a very big problem on his hands. And then thirdly, his secret admirer planned on revealing themselves very soon. Severus wasn't sure if he wanted them to reveal themselves.

Actually, Snape was quite sure that he had no desire to ever meet them.

So, what does he do?

He'd go to the headmaster if past experience hadn't already taught him that he simply couldn't depend on Albus Dumbledore with something like this, particularly something that carried a potential threat towards his life. The Lupin incident proved that.

Slughorn? No, he'd probably just ignore him. The potions master only ever cared about pureblood students and those that were part of his precious Slug club. The only reason he ever paid Severus any kind of attention was because Severus Snape had the best marks in school. He was a star

student, with Slughorn constantly preaching academic excellence it wouldn't do to completely ignore one of the best students in school even if he was just a no name half-blood.

Still, the older man would probably just call him paranoid and brush him off. Professor McGonagall would only help him as far as Dumbledore would allow her to help and the other professors... Severus couldn't see them as being much help.

He's basically on his own. So, what does he do? Is there even anything he can do?

After he got that last letter, Severus was a bundle of nerves. Constantly nervous and jumpy, always watching the entrances and barely getting any sleep. He was constantly scared of being caught off guard, scared of his admirer suddenly appearing in the middle of the night and catching him defenseless with no one there to see him. Eventually other people started to notice. Lily asked him all the time if he was getting any sleep and Malfoy also seemed to show his concern. Severus brushed them off, tried to make it seem like he had everything under control, while he frantically tried to think of a way out of his mess. He couldn't show any fear, he couldn't show weakness.

The façade was holding up pretty well, until about four days later.

He was studying with Diggory again. They were sitting outside on a stone bench in the courtyard with Severus doing all he could to focus on his notes and not glancing around them every few seconds. Diggory noticed, because of course he did.

"Severus are you alright?"

"What-..." Snape said looking up at the brunette for a brief moment before glancing behind them and then back to his notes, "Oh, yes I'm fine."

"Are you sure?" Diggory asked with a frown, "You seem distracted."

"I'm not-" the Slytherin stopped himself short when he saw the older teen arch a brow at him and he let out a soft sigh, "I'm fine I just... I haven't been sleeping well that's all."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, I'm sure." Severus said as he turned the page of his notebook when Diggory suddenly reached out to brush his hair back behind his left ear. Severus looked up to find the brunette smiling softly, "If you're having trouble sleeping then, maybe I could help you with that."

Snape frowned, "How would you help me?"

"The prefects bathroom has this enormous bath with the most heavenly oils and potions. Much better than the showers in the dorm rooms." Diggory explained as he inched a little closer to the younger teen, "I'm sure a nice hot bath would do wonders for your condition. I could let you into the prefect's bathroom if you like."

Severus arched a brow at him, "And you'd do this solely out of the goodness of your heart?"

Diggory let out a soft chuckle, "Aren't we friends?"

"I suppose we are."

"Then I don't see why not. I could even help you wash your back if you'd like."

Severus resisted the urge to roll his eyes, "Of course you would."

“It could be fun.”

The raven gave a snort as he looked back down to his notes, “I appreciate the offer, but I think I’ll pass.”

“Severus.” Diggory said tilting the younger teen’s chin up so he was looking at him, “I like you, you know that don’t you?”

The Slytherin sighed, “I think... I’m aware, yes.”

“How do you feel about me?”

Severus shook his head, “I’m not sure.”

“Well then, let me help you decide.” Diggory suddenly started leaning in, closing the distance between them and Severus’ eyes went wide when-

“PETRIFICUS TOTALUS!”

Someone suddenly screamed and the next moment Diggory was restricted with a total body bind before his body hit the ground. Severus just stared at the prefect in shock before he looked up to see where the spell came from and his eyes went wide-

“Potter?”

The Gryffindor was practically charging towards them. His hair looked like an even bigger mess than usual and his skin was flushed while his eyes glowed with rage.

Of course.

Of course, this is the time that they decide to torment him. Severus reached into his robes and pulled out his wand, preparing to curse the stupid Gryffindor into the next century. He’s been so stressed lately, so anxious and frustrated that suddenly being attacked by one of his school bullies actually made him feel a bit better. He needs something to vent his frustrations.

Potter was just a few feet away, Severus opened his mouth to hiss out a curse when Potter was right beside them, but he didn’t even glance at the Slytherin. No, his attention was focused on Diggory.

“I told you to stay away from him!”

Severus just stared in confusion, “What-Potter what on earth do you think you’re doing-“ then the Gryffindor grabbed his arm and started dragging him away. The action caught him off guard for a brief moment before he quickly managed to pull himself together and forced them to a stop.

“Let me go. What do you think you’re doing you idiot?!”

Potter came to a stop and turned to face him. Severus blinked in surprise. Potter looked... off.

“We’re you, we’re you really going to let him do it?” the Gryffindor asked as he stepped closer and Severus instinctively stepped back.

“What are you talking about?”

“Diggory, he just tried to kiss you. We’re you going to let him do it?”

The Slytherin frowned folding his arms over his chest, "What business is it of yours Potter?"

"What business-... I-" Potter's expression dropped and for a brief moment he looked like a kicked puppy as he took another step forward, "Severus, this has everything to do with me."

The Slytherin blinked when the other used his name and he had to take another step back, "What-"

"How-why don't you understand. I've been trying so hard to show you how much I care about you. To show you how much I need you."

"Potter you aren't making any sense."

"My letters, you got my letters didn't you and the gifts?" Potter said as he stepped closer again, reaching out to touch the Slytherin's neck, "Did you at least get the scarf? It's gotten so cold, but I haven't seen you wearing it. Don't you like it?"

Severus' eyes went wide.

"You... you're the one-"

Potter smiled, "Yes."

"All those letters."

"Yes."

Of course. Severus let out a deep breath, suddenly immensely relieved.

Potter's the one that's been sending the letters. He's the one that's been sending the gifts. Knowing just how low Potter could stoop all in the name of a joke Severus was sure without a shadow of a doubt that this entire thing was nothing but one giant elaborate prank.

Of course, it is.

Severus was relieved. A stupid joke is much better than some love crazed stalker.

Alright time to end this.

"Bravo Potter, you almost had me going for a moment. I have to commend you on your level of dedication." Severus drawled out as he schooled his features into a bored stare, "The letters, the elaborate gifts, following me around just to make it all seem just a little bit more authentic. Really its quite impressive."

"What-" Potter's face fell, "You don't believe me."

"Believe what? That you'd stoop so low as to profess your '*undying love to me*' all in the name of some idiotic prank." Severus gave a snort, "Oh I believe it. Attacking Diggory like a madman was a nice touch by the way, very convincing. Now do us both a favor and leave me alone."

With that the Slytherin turned around to walk back to help Diggory when Potter grabbed his arm all over again to turn him around.

"You don't believe that I love you."

Severus frowned, Potter's eyes looked oddly cold instantly causing a shiver to run down his spine. He tried to wrench his arm free, but the Gryffindor's hand stayed locked around it like a vice. "No,

I don't believe you, now let me go."

"Why not?"

"Why not?!" Severus asked incredulously, "Six years of you and your little followers trying to ruin my life and you ask me why I wouldn't believe in a lie this obvious? Really?"

Potter opened his mouth and closed it again, Severus was still trying to pull free from the Gryffindor's grasp, but Potter was... he felt stronger somehow.

"Let me go--"

"I'll prove it."

"What?"

"I'll prove how much I love you, I'll prove that everything in the letters is true."

"Oh, for the love of--there's nothing to prove you twit!" Severus huffed in frustration, "Give it up already, your deception's been discovered, the prank is over. Now get your hand off of me before I hex it off."

Severus gasped when he was suddenly yanked forward, and Potter spoke less than an inch away from his lips, lifting his other hand to touch his cheek causing the Slytherin to blink in surprise.

"Let me prove it to you."

Severus frowned, "Exactly how are you going to prove it?"

"I'll do anything you ask of me. Anything at all."

Snape gave a snort, "Really? Anything?"

"Anything." Potter whispered, even through his glasses his eyes were so dark. Another shiver ran down Severus' spine, his eyebrows pulled together in a tight line as the strangest feeling came over him and he tried to tug from the taller teen's grasp again but found himself still unable to move an inch.

"Anything?"

Severus still wasn't buying it. After everything that's happened between them, how could he? If Potter insists on carrying on with this charade, then Severus will just have to force him to admit that this whole thing is nothing more than a farce.

"Fine, you want to prove how much you love me, then kill Black for me."

He felt the Gryffindor tense tremendously and he couldn't help but smirk a little since he knew that he'd finally broken through Potters act.

"What?"

"Bring me Sirius Black's head and I'll believe that you love me. Bloody hell, I'll even let you shag me, but first you bring me his head."

Potter said nothing, staring at Severus in complete silence. He didn't even seem to be breathing.

Severus expected him to start freaking out. He expected the Gryffindor to call him a death eater and a freak for not only believing the lies but asking him to do something so heinous in the name of proving his supposed love.

'What kind of a psychopath asks for someone's head!' He'd shout before storming off and spreading it all across the school. Severus was prepared for that, really, he didn't expect much from James Potter.

He'd just have to deal with the school treating him like an even bigger outcast, but he was used to that. Malfoy might actually praise him for coming up with something so decidedly twisted in the face of a supposed love confession. It really won't be so bad.

Severus expected Potter to freak out.

That's not what happened next.

"Alright."

"What?"

Potter suddenly leaned forward and pressed a soft kiss against his temple, lingering for a second before he pulled back. Severus was so surprised he could only stare back with wide eyes.

"I'll do it."

"Huh?"

And then suddenly Potter pulled away completely and headed straight for the castle, leaving a confused Severus behind. The Slytherin looked around himself, just waiting for Black, Pettigrew and Lupin to jump out from somewhere possibly with the whole school in tow ready to humiliate him. No one appeared.

Nothing happened.

Severus looked back to watch Potter enter the castle doors and tensed, eyes slowly going wide.

Suddenly one of the many letters he received from his secret admirer came back to him.

'I'd do anything to have you'

Snape's blood suddenly ran cold.

"No... he wouldn't."

Chapter End Notes

Please review

Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

Hell must be freezing

Chapter Notes

A/N: Hey!

Thanks for all the reviews, I really appreciated them. A lot of them made me laugh. I really appreciate the feedback

Usual apologies

Disclaimer: See previous chapters

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

It's been almost two months since the spell was cast.

Remus sat at a table in the library, staring at the ceiling with his robes set on the chair beside him and his tie loose around his neck.

It's been almost two months, just a few days before the deadline and James hasn't made any headway with Snape.

Severus Snape was difficult. He's always been difficult but now he just seemed so much worse than he was before. Remus couldn't blame him, they haven't been on the best of terms with the raven haired Slytherin so some resistance was expected. But sweet Merlin they could have never guessed that it would be *this* difficult. James wasn't exactly helping the situation.

Remus told him to stay away from Snape, but James wouldn't listen. If he wasn't reacting to Snape spending time with Lily it was because he saw Diggory *practically drooling all over Snape* in the courtyard, James' words not Remus'. Remus told James to stop, James did stop. Only to start stalking Snape around every corner of every corridor day in and day out a few days later. And when he wasn't trailing after Snape he was constantly droning on and on about him.

He's so brilliant.

He's such a prat.

Stupid greasy bat doesn't fucking listen.

What does he even see in Diggory anyway?

Evans doesn't even really seem like his type.

Does Severus even like girls? I don't think so. You'd be able to tell right?

Just on and on and on all day every day. It was getting on all their nerves. To the point where they just gave up and let James go stalk Snape, if only so they could get a moment of peace. It wasn't till later that they found out about the letters and gifts. James insisted that it was going fine, that they were all innocent and absolutely harmless and honestly Remus didn't think it was that bad of an idea.

Maybe if Snape softened up towards his *secret admirer*, he'd be able to soften up to James at least a tiny bit. Of course, there was always the chance of that entire plan backfiring, resulting in Snape somehow taking the gifts the wrong way and therefore laying all their work to waste.

Sirius was a constant bundle of nerves, partly because he felt guilty about the spell he cast and partly because the longer the spell stayed in effect the less restrained James' anger towards the Animagus became. He learned to stay out of James' way while trying to help Remus think of a plan to fix his mess. They didn't really get much done because again.

Snape was difficult.

Impossibly difficult.

They're just a few days away from the deadline now. James has been oddly quiet. He didn't ramble on and on about Snape, he didn't react to Sirius, he didn't do much of anything really. Considering his behaviour since the spell was cast, James suddenly being so restrained was a bad sign. You know what they say about the quiet before the storm.

He went to the library that day intending on going through the book to see if he couldn't find any answers about James' recent behaviour. He didn't find anything, just a vague reference to suggestibility and a loss of restraint.

Remus let out a sigh, rubbed his eyes and decided to call it a day. He grabbed the book and put it back in its place in the Restricted section before going back to the table to collect his things. As he packed up his bag, he thought to his friends.

James was stalking Severus again, he didn't say so but Remus caught sight of him slipping out into the hallway just after catching sight of the Slytherin out in the courtyard. It was a risk letting him out on his own, especially since he was behaving so oddly, but Remus thought he'd be O.K.

The spell hasn't reached maturity just yet and as long as no one did anything stupid like actually try to make a move on Snape then it was probably fine. Knowing just how difficult and intimidating the raven haired Slytherin could be, Remus didn't really see a danger of that happening any time soon. Malfoy's been spending more time around Narcissa Black lately and despite what James believed, none of Snape's housemates seemed romantically interested in him. The only one that posed a real threat was Diggory and with the game against Slytherin coming up soon, Diggory probably wouldn't have much time for that.

Sirius was at quidditch practice, covering for James who seemed to be disappearing on the team more often than not, but it was for their own good. James was a bit unstable to be playing a potentially dangerous and violent sport like that. Peter was...

Actually, Remus wasn't sure where Peter was. These days it's like the portly boy was just elsewhere doing other things, not that Remus had much reason to complain mind you. The situation with James just required more attention from all of them and Peter's clumsy presence would've just complicated an already complicated situation.

The werewolf slung his bag over his shoulder and headed out of the library. It was a relatively quiet day with a few students studying in the library. Madame Pinch gave him a small smile as he left, she was always nicer to him whenever James and Sirius weren't around. Although, considering their reputation concerning dangerous and destructive pranks Remus couldn't blame her.

He walked out of the library walked down the hall, briefly wondering what he could do to help soften Snape a little. All they needed for him to do was to accept that James liked him, they didn't have to start dating or anything of the sort. It was just a confession and an acceptance. But they really weren't on good terms with the Slytherin. Snape didn't trust any of them further than he could throw them, which probably wouldn't be very far. Remus sighed in frustration. On some level he blames himself.

He always knew the things that James and Sirius did to Snape were wrong. He never approved of them meddling with Snape so often, he couldn't even pretend like he understood it. But he never tried to stop them either and that's why he blamed himself. If he'd intervened, if he'd just said something and stopped being afraid of losing the friendship they'd built he might've been able to stop them. He might've been able to catch on to James' true feelings and who knows, they might've been able to get together and they wouldn't be in the mess they're in now.

On another level he was almost grateful for Sirius' lack of foresight. Of course, casting an unknown spell for somewhat idiotic reasons might have been, well... idiotic. But he did it with good intentions and now that they know the truth, they might actually have opportunity to make up with Snape and stop bullying him. James could get the object of his affections and Remus wouldn't have to feel so guilty anymore. But that's only if they somehow manage to break the spell and yet again, Snape is...

Difficult.

It was right in the middle of these thoughts that a hand suddenly grasped his shoulder, forcing him to a stop in the middle of the hallway.

"Lupin!"

"What – Snape?"

Speak of the devil.

Remus blinked in surprise as he turned to find the raven haired Slytherin, his hair was a was a bit ruffled, his face was flushed, he looked like he was out of breath. The werewolf frowned.

"What're--"

"What the hell are you playing at?" the Slytherin hissed and Remus just blinked again.

"What?"

"You and your little friends, you're up to something aren't you?" Snape asked accusingly with a glare in his eyes and Remus just felt incredibly lost.

"Up to something? Snape what on earth are you--"

"I'm talking about Potter apparently losing his mind and professing his undying love for me. That's what I'm talking about." Snape drawled and Remus' eyes went wide.

"You mean... Merlin, he actually did it." Remus whispered quietly, Snape didn't seem to hear.

“I don’t know what any of you are playing at, but I want you to stop.”

“Wait hold on. James confessed to you? He told you he loved you and everything?”

Snape looked like he was resisting the urge to roll his eyes, “Don’t you start with this nonsense too Lupin. I’m not falling for it. It doesn’t matter how many gifts he sends, or how long he follows me around or how many creepy disturbing letters he chooses to send me. It’s not going to work.”

Snape took a step forward and his voice lowered to a snarl, “I don’t care if he actually does bring me Black’s head on a platter. I’m sick and tired of these stupid games you imbeciles keep trying to play with me.”

“Whoa wait!” Remus said eyes going impossibly wide, “What do you mean even if he brings you Black’s head?”

Snape scoffed, “Your friend put up quite a performance, he insisted that he’d do anything I wanted in order to prove that he loved me. Of course, I wasn’t falling for it so I told him to kill Black to prove that he actually loved me and he pretended to agree. You know what it doesn’t even matter. I’m not falling for it, I want you idiots to leave me alone.” Snape said as he turned around to walk away only to stop when Lupin grabbed his arm and turned him around.

“Now... what?” Snape frowned, Remus had gone impossibly pale.

“You told James to kill Sirius, to prove that he loved you?”

Snape’s frown deepened. “Yes.”

“And he agreed?”

“...yes.”

Remus’ eyes went wide, “Oh God...”

Snape paused, “Lupin what-“

Snape let out a yelp when he was suddenly yanked and dragged along as Remus ran in the opposite direction.

“What the- Lupin let go of me this instant.” The raven said tugging back to stop the werewolf as he wrenched his arm free, “What do all Gryffindors think they can just-“

“You idiot! Do you have any idea what you’ve done?!” Remus screamed and Snape blinked before his expression quickly twisted into a sneer.

“Excuse me? I’m the idiot?”

“Yes, you’re the idiot. James is in love with you, you stubborn prat.” People were staring but Remus couldn’t find it in him to care. Snape only stared back with wide eyes.

“He’s been in love with you for years. That’s why he won’t leave you alone, because he loves you so much, you’re all he’s been able to think about for years and now you’ve gone and-“ Remus let out a growl of frustration as he grabbed Snape’s arm again, “You have to come with me so we can fix this.”

“Fix what-“

“Sirius cast a dark spell on James by accident two months ago, the spell forced him to admit his

feelings for you. The only way to break the spell is for him to confess his feelings and for you to acknowledge them. You asked him to kill Sirius to prove that he loved you. You know what dark magic is like Snape so tell me: where do you think James is right now?"

The raven's eyes went wide, somehow it all clicked and he gasped, "Oh God, he's actually going to do it."

Remus huffed out a sigh of frustration as he started running still holding onto Snape's arm, "We need to find him before it's too late."

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Sirius regretted casting the spell on James, not just because of the situation they're in now but also because he really should've noticed earlier. After the spell took effect and James admitted that he fancied Snape, Sirius was shocked. He simply couldn't understand it. He always thought James hated Snape, that the only reason he even bothered with the greasy haired bat was because he was friends with Evans and Evans wouldn't give him the time of day. He thought James was jealous. And well, maybe he was right about James being jealous, just not about who James was jealous of.

The days rolled on, and the spell got stronger and stronger with every day, resulting in more and more spontaneous outbursts of James practically drooling all over the raven haired Slytherin. Sirius realised that he really should've noticed it earlier.

James only ever bothered with Evans when Snape was around, either in earshot or eyesight. When Snape wasn't there, the chaser didn't really bother. James only ever wanted to prank the other Slytherins like Malfoy and Rosier when he saw them hanging around Snape. James always went into a mood whenever one of their pranks didn't really hit their mark and Snape ended up ignoring them for the entirety of the day and on those odd days when one of them ended up in a duel with Snape and Snape managed to beat them; he seemed... happier. He'd go on and on about whatever new spell the raven haired Slytherin used, how Snape looked or something he said. Sirius always just dismissed it as frustrated ramblings but now that he really thinks about it, his best friend was practically gushing about his secret crush right there in front of him and he never noticed.

And then came the incident on the full moon, Sirius really didn't want to hurt Snape he just wanted to scare him. Frighten him so he'd learn his place and stop meddling with the marauders, but he lost control of the situation and James had to save all of them.

He's never seen James quite so angry before. The chaser wouldn't even look at him for weeks after the incident, Sirius understood the severity of the situation though. Snape could've been killed, Remus could've been executed and he would've been sent to Azkaban. Not to mention the fallout that would follow when it was found that the headmaster was keeping a werewolf on school premises. A lot could have gone terrifyingly wrong and it almost did. Sirius thought that was why James was so angry with him, he didn't realise that James was angry for more reasons that he could've imagined.

The truth as staring him right in the face and he was too oblivious to notice it. Really, he's not surprised that James has such little patience with him now. Sirius couldn't blame him, he could only try to think of a way to help his best friend after the mess he'd gotten him in. With the spell having such dramatic effects on James, Sirius decided to take it upon himself to cover for his friend whenever he started acting out. Make excuses when he snapped at someone that so much as looked in Snape's direction the wrong way, cover for him when the prefects made their rounds and found that James wasn't in the dorm room after curfew. He even made excuses for James whenever he skipped out on quidditch practice so he could go looking for Snape.

He figured it was the least he could do till they found a way to get through Snape's stubborn streak.

And what was it with Snape anyway? More than half of the school would consider themselves lucky if James so much as winked at them but Snape wouldn't give him the time of day. Of course, Sirius knew that Snape's hatred of them was mostly justified due to the pranks and bullying they've subjected the ravenette to over the past few years but... it was just easier on his conscience ignoring the facts and focusing on how ridiculously stubborn Snape was instead.

Sirius gave a sigh as he grabbed his bag and made his way out of the locker rooms. Arthur Weasley gave him a grin and a hearty slap on the back as the team left making sure to tell him to remind James of practice next time. He gave them a practiced smile and said he would. Mentally groaning in frustration as he did.

There has to be some way to get Snape to come around. Sirius even considered going to the Slytherin and apologising for all the years of animosity between them, but he knew Snape would believe he was sorry about as much as he would believe that James was in love with him.

He sighed again as he opened the door and headed out through the corridor into the main hallway. Thursday afternoon, Gryffindor had practice earlier than everyone else. It was pretty much empty as he left the changing rooms. Wondering what James and Remus were doing. Remus said that he'd be going back to the library to look up a reason for why James had been behaving so strangely lately, or rather stranger than he has been lately. As for James, Sirius figured he was probably somewhere stalking Snape for the hundredth time that day.

The Animagus gave a scoff, raking a hand through his hair in frustration when he suddenly remembered Peter. Honestly when's the last time they talked anyway? He saw the portly boy just before quidditch practice, headed down to the dungeons but Sirius had been so preoccupied with getting to practice in time he didn't pay him much attention. He probably just had detention, although Sirius couldn't imagine what on earth he'd have detention for.

Sirius frowned, staring at the stone floors beneath his feet in thought when-

"Levicorpus!"

He was suddenly hoisted up into the air and left hanging upside down, his bag dropped to the floor and his wand fell from its holster with a clatter.

"What the hell?!" he looked up and blinked in surprise, "James? What are you doing?!"

James didn't say anything he just kept walking closer, quick determined steps walking towards him with purpose. His eyes were dark and haunting, a shiver ran down Sirius' spine when he noticed the kitchen knife in his friend's left hand.

"James?"

"I'm sorry Sirius, but this has to be done." James said, his voice low and rough. Sirius swallowed hard.

"What needs to be done?"

"He wants your head. I can't have him unless I give him your head." James eyes suddenly went completely pitch black an odd red glow surrounded him and the Animagus' eyes went impossibly wide.

“James. What’re you talking about...”

James stopped his head gave a tilt and his voice dropped another octave with an odd echo, almost sounding like two different people speaking at the same time, “This is the only way. What was hidden must be revealed.”

Sirius gasped when he suddenly remembered the spell he cast. But it couldn’t have reached its maturity! It’s too early.

It didn’t seem to matter though. James lifted his wand and aimed it right at Sirius’ face. Sirius raised his arms to brace for impact.

“Liberacorpus!”

Sirius hit the ground hard, he didn’t even take a moment to groan in pain as he frantically scrambled back. He looked up and found Remus further down the hall staring at them with wide eyes.

“James! Stop!”

“No.” was all that James said before he looked back down to Sirius and Sirius realised that then as probably the time to get a move on. He reached out to grab his own wand only to be stopped short.

“Petrificus totalus!”

And he suddenly couldn’t move.

“James-“

“Silencio!” Remus’ hands went up to his mouth when he realised he couldn’t speak and before he could even try to use his wand James spoke again. *“Incarcerous!”*

The werewolf screamed in silence as he fought against the ties that bound him. Sirius could do nothing more than stare in horror when James suddenly appeared above him, knife in hand with those same black eyes and that same red glow somehow only going brighter. He opened his mouth to speak when-

“Expeliarmus!”

James whirled around when his wand suddenly flew out of his hand and clattered to the side, his eyes widened. “Severus...”

Snape? Sirius wanted to crane his neck to see where on earth the Slytherin suddenly came from.

“Potter that’s enough.” The Slytherin said with his eyes narrowed at the Gryffindor and his wand aimed right at him as he walked around Remus’ bound form, “As much as I’m enjoying this little show and, believe me I am, I think that’s enough for one day.”

James just stared for a moment before he spoke, “You don’t believe me, this is the only way to prove it to you, you said so.”

“Well I’ve changed my mind.” Snape said but he didn’t lower his wand, “I get it alright, you love me. Now put the knife down.”

James didn’t move, Snape took a deep breath as he kept moving forward and stopped just a few feet away. “Potter, put the knife down.”

“You believe me?”

“Yes, so just put the knife down... and we can talk.”

James’ eyes narrowed down even from behind his glasses, Snape noticed.

“You’re lying. You don’t get it do you? I love you Severus, I won’t live without you.” And then he looked over to Sirius’s still form.

Snape’s eyes widened in a panic, “Potter, stop!”

“This is the only way you’ll believe me.” James suddenly turned and went down to a crouch, knife raised as he knelt by his best friend’s side. Sirius could only stare in horror and he realised that this is really it and then-

“James!” James stopped, two arms had wrapped themselves around his shoulders and he glanced back to find Severus clinging to his form. A pale hand went around to turn his head back and the raven pressed a kiss on his lips. Hard, fast and desperate, he pulled James back going down on his knees to pull their bodies close together before he broke it.

James stared back with those black eyes wide as he stared back at the Slytherin.

“James, I believe you.” He said in a rush and James’ eyes started to clear, the glow that surrounded him dimmed until it disappeared completely. The knife in his hand fell to the ground in a loud clatter as he wrapped his arms around Severus’ form and pulled him even closer.

“You believe me?”

“Yes!” Severus said cupping the sides of the chaser’s face to kiss him again, his face still flushed in a panic and adrenaline pumping in his veins, “Yes, yes I believe you so just, stop O.K? Can you do that for me? Will you please just stop James?”

“Anything, anything you want.” James said as he started peppering kisses all over Snape’s face seeming frantic as he tried to pull the raven closer, barely noticing that he was getting weaker and his limbs were starting to feel heavy until his eyelids grew heavy as well and his body went limp as he passed out. Severus was breathing hard when the teen suddenly collapsed on top of him and he continued to stare with wide eyes until Sirius gasped and sat up.

“Snape! Are you alright?!” Remus screamed and Snape looked over to the werewolf to find him scrambling up to his feet to rush over towards them. With that the Slytherin let out a heavy sigh, raking a hand through his hair to push the inky black strands back.

“Sweet Salazar.” Severus said staring at the madman that lay passed out on top of him wondering what on earth he should do now when Sirius suddenly spoke.

“Snape.” The Slytherin looked up and Sirius seemed to swallow hard before he spoke, “Thank you.”

“I didn’t do this for you. I did so I wouldn’t have your death hanging over my head because of your stupidity.” Snape hissed as he looked down at James’ still form. He noticed the kitchen knife beside them and quickly shoved away before taking in a deep breath.

Sirius swallowed hard, before just shaking his head. “I understand, but just so you know. I’m really sorry... not just for this but, for everything.”

Snape only stared back at the Animagus in silence before letting out a sigh as he shut his eyes, "It's official, the world really has gone insane."

Sirius scoffed just as Remus made it beside them and knelt down to check on James, checking his pulse before he let out a soft sigh as he plopped down onto the floor.

"It's finally over."

"Over?" Snape said incredulously, "Would anyone like to inform me of exactly when this started?"

Sirius let out a heavy sigh, "Personally, I think I've meddled enough, James would probably be able to explain it best."

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James woke with a start, bolting upright as he was suddenly ejected from his sleep only to groan when the most excruciating pain echoed through his head. The chaser lifted a hand to his head and clutched it tightly wondering why on earth it hurt so much.

"Here, drink this."

James didn't even bother looking up at the voice that spoke, just automatically accepted the glass that was handed to him and downed its contents. Cool water ran down his throat, so refreshing James ignored the droplets that dripped from his mouth and fell on his shirt. He blindly handed the glass back as he tried to gather his thoughts only to pause when a hand suddenly touched his forehead.

"Seems like the fever died down. You should feel better soon."

James finally looked up and looked up through his hands at the figure beside him but couldn't see more than a blur. It was then that the figure came closer to put something on his face and he almost jumped before he realised it was just his glasses. So he helped guide the hands to put them on and froze at what he saw.

"S-Severus?"

The raven's head gave a tilt, James' eyes went wide as he looked around the room. It looked familiar but it didn't look like his room. There was a fireplace on the other side of the room across from the four-poster bed decked out in red and gold. A plush looking seat beside the bed, with a small side table that had a basin and what looked like a few rags hanging off it.

James frowned, "Where-" the Slytherin arched a brow at him and James thought of a better question, "Why-"

"You passed out after trying to kill your best mate." Severus said and James could see the slightest slither of a smirk tugging at the corner of his lips, "Of course that only came after you professed your everlasting love to me."

James flushed and it suddenly all came rushing back to him.

"Oh Merlin."

"Hmm." Severus hummed as he moved from the bed to the seat beside it, crossing one leg over the other, "I thought it would be best if we got the chance to talk about what happened. Lupin told me about this room and I thought it was as good a place as any." Then the Slytherin paused as he

glanced at their surroundings, "It's quite fascinating; a room that becomes whatever you want it to be. Must be very convenient."

James swallowed hard, unsure of what to say feeling more than just a little exposed.

Severus looked over to the Gryffindor and arched a brow, "Cat got your tongue, Potter?"

James frowned, "Cat..."

Severus rolled his eyes, "It's a muggle expression. You're being oddly quiet. I expected you to start vehemently denying all your actions over the past few weeks. I was ready to drag Lupin in here to force you to acknowledge it all."

James swallowed hard as he looked away, "There's no point in arguing over something we both know is true"

Severus gave a snort, "The great James Potter admits defeat, hell must be freezing."

The chaser rolled his eyes before he spoke, "Why are you here?"

"Why am I here?"

"I know how you..." James let out a frustrated sigh, "I'm not an idiot alright? I know you hate me and you'd probably never even consider liking me. So why are you here? Did you just come here to watch me suffer and squirm?"

Severus leaned back in his seat and looked up in the ceiling almost as if in thought, "While the idea of watching you squirm as you say, certainly crossed my mind that's only part of why I'm here."

"Then why are you here?"

"Curiosity? I'm not sure. I suppose I'm just wondering when all of this happened and why?"

"All of what?"

"Your infatuation with me. When did it start?" Severus lowered his head to look the Gryffindor right in the eye, "Why did it start? A few months ago, you played a prank on me so severe I ended up in the infirmary and now you're writing me love letters and pledging to murder your closest friends in exchange for my affections."

"Sirius... there's this spell--"

"I already know about the spell. Lupin helpfully supplied me his notes on it. I know what it does. It amplifies suppressed emotions to such a degree, that the subject that has the spell cast on them has no choice but to act on their innermost desires. What I don't understand is where on earth the feelings that the spell amplified could have come from." Severus explained easily, "I don't remember you and I ever having so much as a civil conversation with one another so I'm not sure where all of this came from. Care to enlighten me?"

James swallowed hard, "What does it matter?"

"It doesn't, but I also came here to watch you suffer remember?"

James resisted the urge to growl in annoyance, "I don't have to tell you anything."

Severus arched a brow, "You're right you don't have to say a word, I just thought you'd like to explain exactly why you were forced to stalk me for the better half of three months before attempting to murder one of your friends for me."

James sighed, honestly what does he have left to lose?

"It started, that day on the train."

"What day?"

"The first day, the day we met."

Severus blinked, James pushed on. "I've liked you since the first day we met in first year."

"And you've been pining after me ever since." Severus' tone was mocking but the shock in the Slytherin's voice was clear, James looked up at him.

"Yeah, I thought I'd get over it but I never did. All the pranks I played on you, the teasing... I just. I know it's stupid but I knew you didn't care about me. I knew you wouldn't spare me a second look, not unless I made you look at me."

"So you made me look." Severus finished quietly though his eyebrows furrowed and his mouth twisted ever so slightly in confusion.

James nodded, "Once I started, I didn't know how to stop and I didn't want you to look away. I thought it was under control but then Sirius cast the spell and... here we are."

Severus only stared back at him, James let out a deep breath.

"You don't believe me."

"You stalked me for two months and tried to kill your best friend for me. I don't think I have the luxury to not believe you." Severus said with a soft sigh as he shut his eyes for a moment. "Potter, you understand that I don't feel the same way."

James resisted the urge to react to the sudden pang of heartbreak that throbbed in his chest at the Slytherin's statement and only nodded his head. He expected this much to be honest.

"Yes."

"And you understand why?"

"Yes."

Severus sighed, "Good. The spells worn off so there's really no reason for us to be around one another--"

"Can I ask you something?" James blurted out and Snape frowned.

"What?"

"If I hadn't done what I did." James looked down at the sheets in his lap for a moment, "If I'd been nicer all those years ago. Would you have liked me then?"

"I'm not sure how that matters anymore."

“I just want to know.”

Snape took in a deep breath staring back at the Gryffindor before he spoke, “You’re handsome. Athletic. I’m not sure why anyone would refuse you if you were half decent to them.”

James looked up at the other, “But would you have liked me?”

“I’m afraid I need more than a pretty face to keep me happy, Potter.” Snape said as he got up from his seat and brushed down his robes, “I want someone intelligent, ambitious, charming, powerful no amount of attractiveness can make up for that I’m afraid.”

James sighed and opened his mouth to speak only for the Slytherin to continue.

“However, if you weren’t such an arrogant hateful prat towards me all those years. I think I might have made an exception.”

James blinked, “Really?”

Snape rolled his eyes, “I’m not sure I know anyone that would turn down a handsome quidditch captain. Despite what you and your friends believe or at least what I thought you believed, I’m only human.”

“I had a chance.”

“And you blew it.” Snape let out a sigh, “I think that’s enough for one day. Good bye, Potter.”

“Wait!”

“What now-“

Severus was cut off and his eyes went wide when James suddenly reached out to grab his arm and dragged him back towards the bed, pressing a kiss against the Slytherin’s lips before he spoke.

“Give me a second chance.”

Snape rolled his eyes despite the blush he felt rising to his cheeks at the action, “No.”

“Why not?”

“Because being in love with me doesn’t make up for five years of bullying and torture. If anything, it makes you insane.”

“I prefer to think of it as being dedicated.” James said trying to lighten the mood and Snape gave him a bored look.

“You’re not helping your case.”

“Look I know what I did was wrong and if I could take it all back I would but I can’t.” James took a deep breath, “All I’m asking for, all I want is the chance to make it up to you.”

“Why?”

“Because I can’t go back to the way things used to be. I don’t want to hurt you but after two months of feeling everything you make me feel and feeling it so clearly... I don’t want to have to stop. I’m not sure if I’d be able to stop-“

“Potter-“

“We don’t have to start dating right away, but I’d like for us to at least start as friends. I can’t stay away from you Severus, I don’t even want to try.”

Snape just stared back at him for a moment, “And what about your friends, what about your housemates?”

“At this point, I’m pretty sure Sirius and Remus would settle for me just not trying to murder either of them anytime soon.” Snape gave a snort and a smile pulled at his lips James felt his chest warm the slightest bit at the sight, “As for everyone else, I don’t care. As long as they keep your hands off of, you then they can think whatever they like.”

Snape rolled his eyes, “I’m assuming the no touching clause is specific to Phillip Diggory?”

“Yes.” James said without any hesitation, Severus arched a brow,

“And what if I decided that I wanted his hands on me?”

James’ eyes widened the slightest bit and he had to resist the urge to glare as the Slytherin continued, “I’m serious. What if during our friendship I decided I wanted to be intimate with someone other than you? Then what? Would you be fine with it?”

“I don’t like to share.” James admitted and Severus shrugged, “Neither do I, but I wouldn’t be yours to share.”

James didn’t know what else to say so he let the Slytherin go, “Then I won’t try to keep you.”

“That’s it?”

“That’s it. If I can’t have all of you then... I don’t want some of you. It would hurt too much. You’re too good to share.”

Severus blinked a light blush powdered his cheeks but James was too busy wallowing in his own pity to notice. The Slytherin looked away let out a sigh of frustration as he brushed his hair behind his ear.

“Merlin you’re pathetic.”

James looked up to glare only to freeze when the raven suddenly leaned forward and gave him a soft kiss, careful and surprisingly uncertain. The raven was blushing a dark red by the time he pulled back touching his lips as he spoke.

“Like I said before, I don’t like sharing either. If I catch you so much as looking in some girl’s direction it’s over.”

“It’s over,” James asked with wide eyes as he licked his lips, “Does that mean that-“

“It means that I’m willing to let you make it up to me.” Severus said as he got up from the bed. “But that doesn’t mean that I’m ready to just jump into bed with you. We can... try to be friends.”

“That’s fine, perfect even! I mean, we can wait as long as you want.” James said, a little too eagerly and Snape let out a sigh, “I’m going to regret this aren’t I?”

James took Snape’s hand and pressed a kiss on the raven’s hand before looking up into his eyes, “I promise I’ll make sure you don’t.”

Snape's blush got one shade darker even as he spoke, "Friends don't kiss."

"Well you kind of started it." Severus' eyes narrowed down at the other and James' lips quirked up in a smile, "Sorry, I'll behave. I can wait. I swear."

Severus let out a soft sigh and shook his head.

"I'm going to regret this."

Chapter End Notes

A/N: Alrighty

Next chapter is a time skip to a couple of months later. I figured I should give you a heads up on that. This story is kinda short but there's a Marauders/Severus story I started on a little while back that I'm really excited to get posting on. The only reason I haven't posted on it yet is because there is a lot going on in that story and I want to finish a couple of the stories I have up right now before committing to that one, cause it is a bit bigger.

Anyway, please review

Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

A/N: Long time no see.

Thanks for all the reviews and sticking around so long.

So this is just... I'm so disappointed in myself.

I've been stuck with this chapter for over a year I think. It's just been on my laptop, unpublished. The problem is that I had planned on doing a quick little thing for the fourth chapter. Just a little look into the future at Severus' relationship with James. I was aiming for fluff and cuteness, a little bit of possessive James, just a scene of them hanging out together; 2000 words tops. But then I thought let's do something funny with James' parents trying to set up a marriage contract between James and Severus as a little bonus extra; so 3000 words tops. But then I started writing and all of my plans went right into the trash. I kept fighting with myself because this is not what I wanted this chapter to be, but I couldn't find it in me to delete it and I just wasn't as into the other idea anymore so here we are.

I promise I'm going to try and make sure the next chapter is last. I wanna finish it off with a clean clear resolution between James and Severus, O.K maybe not clean and clear but you get the idea. This story has been incomplete for way too long.

Usual apologies

Disclaimer: see previous chapters

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“Thank you.” Euphemia said to the muggle that set her cup of tea down in front of her and reached out to pour in some cream and sugar. Slowly stirred and sipped from the cup.

She's in Muggle London today. She can't remember the last time she spent time there, she barely has the time but she enjoyed it on the days when she could. Today however, it isn't a social call exactly. She had a very important errand to run.

For the past few months James has been writing her dozens of letters, each one fawning over a boy that seemed to have caught his interest. A boy named Severus Snape. The same Severus Snape James was constantly getting into trouble over at school. It was a shock. James never really talked about any love interest he had, he never even really mentioned any girls that he liked, though she overheard James and Sirius talking about a girl named Lily Evans every now and then. But he never told his mother about any one he might like. So its needless to say that she was quite shocked to find out about her son's infatuation with the Snape boy. Even more so when she found out that he was a Slytherin since the house rivalry between Slytherin and Gryffindor has always been fierce, even in her time at Hogwarts. But she'd never been able to refuse James anything he wanted and his letters made it painfully obvious just how badly he wanted Severus.

Euphemia thought it might be nice to have the boy over for the summer. She and Fleamont could meet the object of their son's affections and James would get to spend a few months with said

object of his affections nearby.

It took a bit of doing but a contact at the ministry helped her find Severus' home address and the identity of his parents.

Euphemia was surprised to find out that Severus was a half-blood, but what shocked her more than anything else was the fact that his mother was Eileen Prince; the long lost heir to the Prince bloodline.

It was rumoured that she just disappeared sixteen years ago though no one knew why. But knowing her son's age and finding out that she married a muggle she could guess what happened. The Princes were notoriously strict in regards to bloodline purity, a practice both she and Fleamont were sure was the cause for most pureblood couples incapability to conceive. It's something they blamed for their own inability to have children, so they never dissuaded James from marrying outside of the typical pureblood construct. In fact, they encouraged it. James falling for a half-blood boy wasn't a problem. But Euphemia wondered about Eileen Prince, now Eileen Snape.

If she married a muggle and had children then surely their values aligned quite well together. What she couldn't understand is why Eileen seemed to have disappeared from the wizarding world so completely. Her parents may have disowned her but surely she'd want to make sure Severus stayed in touch with his wizarding roots. From what she could tell from James' letters, Severus was incredibly talented in magic so she must've taught the boy some things. But still-

She sent an owl to Eileen Snape to ask if they could meet so they could discuss something concerning her son. It was odd how long it took Eileen to reply, even odder how she sent a turtle dove to deliver her reply instead of an owl. There were just two days left before the summer holidays when she finally got a reply.

That was actually quite puzzling.

"Euphemia Potter?"

Euphemia looked up, blinking in surprise at the sudden visitor only to pause when she saw the woman standing before her.

She wore a long grey dress that dragged on the ground, a faded black sweater that looked like it was at least one size too big and clutching a worn looking leather handbag against her side. She looked thin and frail, pale skin and shallow cheeks, bone straight pitch-black hair tied in a bun at the top of her head with some of the strands falling limply around her face. Thin pale lips, large dark eyes that looked almost dilated. There was the lightest sheen of sweat on her forehead. The woman looked away, coughing into her hand.

"I... yes?"

The woman cleared her throat, "I'm Eileen Snape, you sent me a letter about Severus."

Euphemia blinked and suddenly an uneasy feeling of dread filled her stomach. She quickly stood up, almost spilling her tea in her hurry to set it down.

"Oh of course please sit down." She reached out to the other woman on instinct to help her take her seat. Eileen seemed to flinch at the sudden movement however. Euphemia shrank back and gave a wry smile as she took her own seat and Eileen watched her as she sat down herself.

"Would you like anything to drink?" Euphemia said lifting her hand to gesture for her waiter. Eileen shook her head.

“No I,” the raven haired woman paused glanced up at her then nodded, “I’m sorry. A cup of tea would be lovely.”

“Right.”

The young man stopped beside them, “Yes mam.”

“Another cup of tea oh and something to eat?” Euphemia said, trying not to make it too obvious that Eileen’s state was causing her great worry. If the mother looked this way-

“No thank you.”

“Are you sure? It really isn’t any trouble.”

“Just the tea, please.” Eileen said sternly and Euphemia almost froze under that striking pitch black gaze even though the eyes seemed somewhat unfocused.

She gave a wry smile, “Just tea.”

“Right away.” The muggle walked away and Euphemia just watched as the woman settled in her seat, unsure of how to start. Eileen’s appearance suddenly filled her with so many questions.

“You said you had something to discuss about Severus.” Eileen said keeping her bag on her lap, pressed tightly against her chest. Euphemia cleared her throat.

“Oh of course. Well you see, my son James, goes to Hogwarts. They’re classmates as you may know.”

Eileen paused, her lips pulled into a slight frown, “Severus doesn’t really talk about school when he’s home.”

“Well, they’re in the same year and James... he’s been writing me over the past few months and he seems so terribly fond of Severus that I was hoping that it would be possible if Severus spent the summer with us so the boys could spend the summer together.” Eileen blinked in shock and Euphemia panicked slightly, quickly trying to salvage the situation. “I’m sure you’d prefer it if Severus went home and you barely know us at all but I promise your son will be perfectly safe and-“

“No, no its fine.” Eileen interrupted sitting up in her seat a bit more, “Yes. Yes Severus can spend the summer with you.”

Euphemia paused, “Really?”

“Yes.”

“If you’re worried about anything then you and your husband would be more than welcome to come to our home and-“

“No!” the raven suddenly snapped in alarm and Euphemia fell silent. Eileen swallowed hard, gave a small smile, “That won’t be necessary. If your son is one of Severus’ friends then I’m sure he’ll be fine. Severus doesn’t have many friends, I’d like for him to spend time with them.”

“Great.” Euphemia said with a smile, though she couldn’t help the feeling of unease that grew in the pit of her stomach. She doesn’t know anyone who would simply let their child spend months at a time with people they didn’t know, even if they insisted that their children were friends.

"I just..." Euphemia looked up when Eileen suddenly spoke. The raven's hands were clasped together wringing nervously before she quickly reached for her handkerchief to give a pained cough.

"Are you alright?"

"I'm fine." Eileen choked out just as her cup of tea was set in front of her, she poured in three packets of sugar and stirred before taking a sip. Euphemia waited patiently for her to speak.

"I just have one request, there's something I hope you'll do for me if you take Severus for the summer."

Euphemia frowned, "Of course, what do you need me to do?"

Eileen gave her a weak smile as she set her cup down, "Do you have a piece of parchment and a quill?"

"Uhm," Euphemia quickly reached into her back which she had hanging off of her chair and rummaged through it before she smiled, "Aha."

She set the parchment down along with an old ink pot and quill.

Eileen reached out to take the items and immediately started writing, "I need you to pass on this letter."

Euphemia's head gave a tilt, "Pass it on to who?"

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"You're using my mother to get to me. This is low even for you Potter."

James shrunk back against the carriage that they rode in. Sirius smirked at his friend from the corner of his eye where he sat looking out through the window. While gorgeous onyx eyes glared at him.

"In my defence I didn't ask mother if you could come home with me for the summer."

Snape didn't stop glaring as he folded his arms across his chest, "Then why on earth would she go to my mother and ask her if I could?"

"I don't know!" James said with a pout as he sat up a bit more to look the Slytherin in the eyes, "I know how you hate to have your space invaded, I wouldn't have done something like this without talking to you about it first. I didn't tell her to do it I swear. You have to believe me Sev."

Severus only stared back, "How did she find out about me in the first place?"

"James' been telling her about you for months." Sirius suddenly said drawing their attention with a smug smirk on his face before he started reciting dramatically, "Honestly, you'd swear he still had the spell working on him. Dear mother, Severus sat next to me in class today. Dear mother Severus smiled at me today. Mother he has the most beautiful eyes-OW!" the Animagus hissed as he rubbed his arm when James suddenly slugged him hard.

"That's not-"

"So basically you made it sound like we were dating?" Severus hissed and James stuttered.

“No, I just informed her of our friendship. I can’t be held accountable for her conclusions.”

Severus shut his eyes and rubbed his temples, “Salazar give me strength.”

“But I mean this isn’t that bad right? We get to spend the summer together and to be honest, I’m really looking forward to it Severus.” James said with a smile as he looked down at his hands and his face flushed with a blush. Severus sighed.

“We are not sleeping in the same room.”

James’ head snapped up and he grinned that stupid dopey grin and Severus had to look away. “Of course not, there are plenty of rooms and besides. I don’t think my parents would find it appropriate for us to share a room anyway.”

Severus only shook his head as James continued, “I can’t wait to show you the dragon stables and the meadow behind the house. There are all sorts of plants and flowers there, mother always says that they make some of the best potions. We could spend the day out there tomorrow.”

The Slytherin gave him a bored look, “You’ve been thinking about taking me home for a while haven’t you?”

James flushed, “What-“

“You sound like you’ve been thinking about it for a while.” Severus said looking out the window to the countryside slowly passing by, “You sound a bit, rehearsed.”

“Well, I-“

“Just so you know, I expect you to make this worth my while.” His lips twitched up into a smile and James couldn’t help but smile back.

The past few months have been an adjustment.

The first few days it seemed like James didn’t even know what to say to Severus at first. Nervous hellos’ and brief smiles in the hallways is about all he could manage at first. There was just so much between them, so much that happened in the past, so much that James wanted to happen between them that he didn’t know how to behave.

The first few days were awkward.

It wasn’t till two weeks later that things changed when the Slytherin suddenly slid into the seat beside him in the library. Both Remus and Sirius immediately made themselves scarce when Severus sat down, James still didn’t know what to say so he mostly stuttered like an idiot before Severus spoke.

“You’re staring.”

“What?”

“You keep staring at me, it’s getting annoying.” Snape said simply, “I assume that you used to stare before but since I know that you’re staring and why you’re always staring, it’s starting to get annoying.”

“I-“

“It needs to stop.”

"I can't help it." James sighed, "I'm just not sure how to behave now."

Severus let out a sigh of his own, "Lily says that you failed your last potions assignment."

"What does that have to do with--"

"You said you wanted us to try being friends right?" the raven asked with an arched brow, "I'll help you with potions, one hour, two days a week. But then the staring needs to stop."

James opened his mouth and then shut it again, "Two hours, five days a week."

Severus paused, "Two hours three days a week."

"One hour, three days a week and you have to go out with me Hogsmeade weekend."

"On a date?"

James flushed ever so slightly, "No, no not a date. We're starting as friends right? I just want to spend the day with you."

Severus sighed, "Fine."

"Really?"

"Yes."

"That's great." James beamed and Severus simply raised a brow at the other.

"Remember, you have to stop staring at me. Some of my housemates have started to notice and I've run out of excuses for why."

"You could just tell them the truth." James tried and Severus gave a snort.

"What truth? That you're in love with me and almost brought me Sirius Black's head on a silver platter to prove it. Yes, I can see that going very well."

"You could tell them that we're friends."

"Absolutely not. I have no intention of making any of this more difficult than it needs to be."

James frowned, "By telling them that we're friends?"

Snape stared at him, "You and I were enemies just a few weeks ago, everyone in school, myself included, thought that you hated me. It makes no sense for us to suddenly be friends."

"I suppose that's true."

"In any event, I don't like parading my private affairs around in front of people. I hardly see how this situation needs to change that."

James looked down at his hands, resisting the urge to pout like a child before he spoke, "So, you haven't told anyone about me then?"

"There's nothing to tell." Severus said clearly, "We're *attempting* to be friends remember? Besides, I would've thought you'd be happy to know that I'm not spreading the word on your affections for me."

“I don’t mind.” James admitted. Severus blinked and pulled back, James resisted the urge to smile. He still loves getting a reaction out of the Slytherin. “I don’t care what anyone thinks, as long as I get to spend some time with you then I could care less.”

Severus looked at him for, for once without any annoyance or anger, just a simple contemplative look that James still somehow couldn’t decipher.

“Two hours four days a week and I’ll go out with you Hogsmeade weekends. But if my ‘mates’ ask what’s going on then I’ll be the one to tell them, is that clear? You are not allowed to go around claiming me as your friend or anything else for that matter.”

This time James smiled, “Yes, definitely.”

The Slytherin’s eyes narrowed ever so slightly, “You know, you were never this cooperative before. Not even that first day that we met. Tell me, if I’d been more receptive towards your affections would you always have been this devoted?”

James felt his cheeks flush ever so slightly, “Devoted isn’t the word I’d use.”

“Is that a no?”

James sighed, “I think we both know the answer to that.”

Severus didn’t respond to his comment, he simply got up and said goodbye. Sirius and Remus came back to the table as soon as he’d left and immediately started teasing him because of the blush that flooded his cheeks.

Things were somewhat easier after that, less awkward.

They studied together two hours a day, four days a week.

Severus was the strictest teacher he’s ever had, though James had to admit the Slytherin knew more about potions than Slughorn could ever hope to know. They went through James’ textbook, going from the front to the back and James suddenly realised why Severus always seemed to do so much better in potions than everyone else. You see everyone else used the textbooks to study, Severus also used the textbooks but he also had hundreds if not thousands of notes written along the margins of his textbook. Hundreds of little corrections made here and there that seemed to make all the difference when brewing.

Honestly it’s a miracle any of them managed to pass potions.

Then came the Hogsmeade outings. James had fun and he’s pretty sure Severus did too though of course the Slytherin would never admit to that. And finally Severus started showing to the quidditch games. Remus would surprisingly tease him mercilessly on that little fact but, James did his best to ignore it despite the bright flush that coloured his cheeks every time.

Now, Severus is spending the summer with him.

It’s moments like these that James realises how amazing his mother is. He didn’t even want to question how she managed to pull this off. He was just grateful that she did.

James looked over at Severus for a moment. The window was open, causing pitch black strands to brush against the Slytherin’s cheek as he watched the scenery pass outside. He blinked when he suddenly noticed that Severus had noticed him watching. Severus rolled his eyes before suddenly reaching out to take James’ hand. The Gryffindor blinked and felt his cheeks flush the way they

just constantly seem to do around the raven.

Severus shook his head as he turned his gaze back to the scenery outside.

“Idiot.”

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The boy, Severus Snape, looked remarkably similar to his mother. They had the same pale skin, same long bone straight hair and the same dark soul consuming eyes. Briefly, Euphemia realised what it was that her son saw in this boy.

Sirius had already run off into the house, having greeted both Lord and Lady Potter with a smile and a hug before running off to put his things in his room. James stood by Severus' side and Euphemia had to fight back hard against the urge to smile. She isn't sure she's ever seen her son look quite so nervous before. The light blush that powdered his cheeks, the way he couldn't quite meet his parents eyes, the way he fidgeted with his hands. It was lovely. She shared a look with Fleamont who didn't bother hiding his amusement as he smiled at the two teens.

Severus however didn't drop his gaze. The boy met their eyes defiantly. Back straight, chin up and eyes steady, though his eyes betrayed him. There was so much uncertainty there, so much distrust.

“Mother, Father, this is Severus Snape. My-well-my friend. Severus these are my parents.” James said carefully glancing up nervously at the boy beside him who simply inclined his head in a greeting.

“It's a pleasure to meet you Lord and Lady Potter.”

Euphemia shook her head and waved off the display dismissively, “Now now, there's no need for such formalities.” She stepped forward and pulled him into a hug, the tiny frame she could feel under his robes wasn't lost on her, neither is the way the boy tensed under her touch. So much of it reminded her of his mother's behaviour. She pulled back, gave the boy a warm smile, “Euphemia and Fleamont is perfectly fine. You're James' ... friend after all, that makes you family, isn't that right dear?”

Fleamont nodded, “Of course.”

“Exactly.” Euphemia said before pulling back and giving the two teens a bright smile, “Now you must be exhausted, James can show you to your room.” Then she looked over to her son, “It's the Ivory room Jimmy.”

“The I-“ James stuttered and gaped, “But that room is all the way-... I thought he could stay in the room across from mine and Sirius-“

“I'm sure you did. The ivory room, James.” Euphemia said clearly, she could see the amusement in Severus' eyes and couldn't help but let out a brief giggle, “Dinner's in two hours, I'll let you get settled and one of the elves will call for you once it's ready.”

“Thank you.” Severus said with a brief nod and James huffed as he led the way up the stairs on the porch and led the way inside.

“C'mon its this way.”

They watched the two teens walk away. Euphemia let out a sigh only to pause when her husband spoke.

“You’ll need to tell him soon.”

The woman let out another sigh, one less content than the last as she turned back to face the wizard, “He hardly arrived, shouldn’t we give him a few days just to get settled.”

“The longer you wait, the harder it’ll be. They’ll be here to see the boy in the next few days.”

Fleamont said as he turned so he was looking the woman right in the eyes, “Besides, this is a good thing.”

“I know.” Euphemia took in a deep breath, “We’ll tell him, lets just give him a little time.”

Fleamont sighed, moving forward to take his wife’s hand and pressed a kiss on her cheek. “Alright, but just two days Phemia.”

“Two days.”

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Severus lay in the bed, staring up at the ceiling in thought. He couldn’t sleep, which is new since he usually slept quite well as long as he wasn’t at home. Then again, sleeping under the same roof as his so-called enemy probably had something to do with that. He still couldn’t fully wrap his mind around it, didn’t fully understand why he’s humouring Potter’s affections. It was just...

After they arrived at the Potter manor, Potter left him alone to get settled in his room. Mostly because Severus all but threw him out before he could even try to get too comfortable. He didn’t unpack his bag, just set them in the closet and walked over to stand beside the window which looked out over the garden. It was a large beautiful space filled with flowers and trees as far as the eye could see. It was idyllic, like something out of a fairy tale. He wanted to feel bitter about it, because of course Potter grew up in a picturesque home with wonderful parents and just about anything he could ever ask for. But he didn’t. He wasn’t bitter or even the slightest bit angry.

For the most part Severus just felt empty.

He didn’t even notice the time go by, the sun start to set or the enchanted lamps in the room flicker on until an elf suddenly popped into the room to summon him downstairs for dinner.

He went downstairs, the table was filled with every manner of food, it was almost like he never left Hogwarts. Lord and lady Potter were warm and polite, they asked him questions about his studies, the classes he liked at school, what he planned to do after graduation. Severus didn’t miss how they seemed to be avoiding asking about his home life. It was almost glaring how they avoided asking about his parents and how he grew up, almost like they knew and were trying to avoid making him uncomfortable.

He’d blame James for that if he wasn’t perfectly sure that he’s never told the Potter heir about his home life. James asked quite frequently, always with this air of infinite fascination. Severus always made sure to tell him the bare minimum. Potter for all his apparent idiocy never really delved too deeply into that territory, but Severus is pretty sure he was only doing it as a way to avoid upsetting the Slytherin and giving Snape an excuse to ignore him for any length of time.

But still Euphemia and Fleamont were polite and warm and friendly, Severus made sure that he was sufficiently polite in return.

They had dinner and dessert. Lady Potter suggested that the children bathe before going to bed, after a long day’s travel and all that.

Severus didn't argue, he was glad to have the rest of the night to himself without sitting through a few more hours of polite conversation.

He took a bath, brushed his teeth and spent half an hour just staring at his reflection in the mirror before getting into bed. Now the lights are out and he's staring at the ceiling, wondering what on earth he's doing. Why he's allowing Potter's affections? Why he agreed to all of this and Severus realised how frustratingly simple the answer was.

It felt nice.

It felt good having someone shower that kind of affection on him, if felt good feeling wanted. In some sick twisted way, the fact that Potter was willing to kill for him felt... felt good even if he wasn't entirely in control of himself at the time.

For those first few weeks after Potter's confession he was still confused... and immensely annoyed. Potter stared at him like a lovesick puppy and the look made his skin crawl for a variety of reasons. He knew what Potter wanted and but he didn't quite feel up to it just yet. He agreed to try to be friends with him to keep Potter appeased while he tried to figure out how he felt about the entire situation and exactly what he wanted to do about it. Days turned to weeks and then months and still Severus wasn't sure what to think. Potter kept staring at him like he was made from gold, showering him in his undivided attention and Severus still didn't fully understand why.

But it still felt good, so sometimes he'd let Potter stare, let him ask his questions and hang around him. Sometimes he'd be his usual annoying pestering self, other times it was clear that Potter was trying his best not to get on Severus' bad side. The raven would be lying if he said that he didn't enjoy that on some level.

A few weeks ago. It was Hogsmeade weekend and it was raining. They still went into the village, even though most of the students chose to avoid the rain by staying in the castle. It was better that way, less people to gawk at them and whisper about why their precious Gryffindor prince was hanging around Snivellus. They went to the Three Broomsticks as usual. It wasn't too awkward since Lily and her friends decided to tag along, *along* with Black and Lupin. They were there for about an hour before Potter insisted on sneaking off and heading out just the two of them.

Severus agreed, he's never really liked socialising in a crowd and though there weren't that many people in their booth Lily's friends could be a bit much sometimes. They went out into the street, Severus cast a heating charm and a rain resistance spell around himself and Potter did the same. They went to the apocathery where Severus looked through some of their newer inventory. It was amusing if nothing else, how Potter tried so hard to pretend like he knew exactly what Severus was talking about as he pointed out some of the potions and ingredients in the various bottles and jars. Then they went to Honey Dukes where Potter insisted on getting him some hot chocolate before they headed back out into the rain again. His spells had worn off by then, he pretended not to notice when the Gryffindor recast the spells, ignored how the fact that Potter had cast the spells over both of them required them to stand a bit closer than normal.

They ended up walking back to Hogwarts without the others. Severus didn't mind. Lily was his only friend in the group and he could find the time to speak with her some other time. He'd planned on going straight to his room once they got back to Hogwarts, but then James caught his wrist before he could make his way down to the dungeons. The stupid idiot blushed and said that he was hoping they could spend some more time together.

"We can go to the room of requirement." He said and Severus arched a brow at him.

"And exactly what would we do once we got to the room of requirement?"

“Talk? This is the first time I’ve been able to get you alone all week.”

“I’ve been helping you with potions four days a week.”

“Studying doesn’t count.” James said with a roll of his eyes and Severus resisted the urge to do the same. “Besides, you promised you’d spend Hogsmeade weekend with me.”

“Are you saying that today doesn’t count?”

“Not when I had to share you with everyone else.”

“You never specified that before.”

“Well, I am now.”

Severus rolled his eyes.

When they stepped into the room, Severus was both surprised and relieved when it opened up to a simple sitting room. No bed, just two comfortable chairs in front of a warm fire.

It was... nice.

They argued for a bit, but that was somewhat part of the course for his relationship with the Gryffindor really. But there wasn’t as much bite in their banter as there used to be and most of Severus’ annoyance was more aimed at the damnable adoration in Potter’s eyes whenever he looked at him. Mostly because Severus still didn’t understand where on earth it could have come from.

They’ve never been nice to one another. Severus can’t even remember a single moment when he was even civil with the other teen before all this. That day in the room he decided to drop all the pretences and just ask.

Potter surprised him with his response.

“You’re beautiful.”

Severus blinked, “What?”

“I’ve always loved your eyes.” James said clutching the cup of hot chocolate in his hands while his cheeks powdered with a light flush, “That day we met, it was one of the first things I noticed about you. We’d hardly even spoken but, I almost felt like you could see right through me. It was terrifying to be honest but at the same time it almost felt like I could see right into you if I could just keep your eyes on mine for long enough.” James shook his head, “You were so smart too, you still are, but back then I just had to look into your eyes and I could tell how brilliant you were and... I look into your eyes and I see everything that I’ve ever wanted. I want to be able to look into your eyes forever.”

Severus just stared back, unsure of what to say. He looked away, leaning back to stare into the fire.

“It sounds like infatuation.”

“Maybe it was.” James said, “But, that’s not what it is now.”

Severus didn’t say anything to that, unsure of what to say when James spoke first.

“Can I ask you something?”

“Fine.”

“Have you ever... I mean, I’ve never seen you with anyone, not really anyway and I was just wondering?”

“Yes.” Severus answered shortly taking a sip from his cup only to pause at the silence that fell over them, he looked up and rolled his eyes at the look on James’ face. “Yes, I do have a life outside of you Potter.”

“I know that!” James answered with his face flushing ever so slightly, Severus scoffed softly.

“I suppose you’d like to know who?”

“Does it matter?”

“I don’t think so no. Our relationship was brief and short lived.”

“Were you in love with him?”

Severus almost choked on his hot chocolate at the startled laugh that bubbled up from his throat. He looked away into the fire.

“No it was never like that, he was just there when I needed him and I was there when he needed me.”

James lips twitched up into a smile, “Why did you laugh just now?”

Severus shook his head, “Not everyone is as invested in this love nonsense as you are Potter.”

“You think its nonsense?”

“I don’t see the point to it.”

“There is no point to it and that’s the point.”

Severus rolled his eyes hard, “That doesn’t make any sense.”

“Well,” James started, his cheeks flushing ever so slightly, “Feelings don’t need to have a point for them to be... for them to be important. I mean, you love Lily, don’t you?”

Severus paused but didn’t answer him and James shrugged, “I want you to be more than just my friend but, right now just being close to you is enough.”

Severus sighed and looked away, “My last... relationship wasn’t romantic. He was just, something that I needed at the time.”

“But not anymore?”

“Something like that.”

“Well, I can do the same thing, for you if you want. I can be whatever he was for you.”

The Slytherin shook his head, “Trust me, you wouldn’t want that.”

“Why not?”

Severus didn’t answer him, James didn’t push. Instead he changed the subject, started droning on

about Gryffindor's next quidditch match before asking if Severus would be there to watch.

Severus rolled his eyes at the blush on the other teen's face but still promised to be there and he was. Thankfully James didn't make a big deal out of the affair. He smiled at the Slytherin in the stands and then went to find him afterwards, pouting about the fact that Severus had refused to wear the Gryffindor's scarf during the game.

"Its not even like we were playing against Slytherin, it was Hufflepuff."

"I'm not sure I see your point." Severus said in a dull tone, "Besides, lets not pretend like this isn't another one of your attempts to get me in your clothing."

James flushed, "I... you know what, I'm not dignifying that with a response."

"Good, I was hoping that you wouldn't."

James rolled his eyes, only to surprise the other when he quickly leaned in and kissed the raven on the cheek.

Severus frowned, "Potter--"

"Think of it as my reward... for winning the match." James explained quickly with his flush going darker. Severus wanted to sigh in frustration only to shake his head before he leaned in and kissed James on his cheek in very much the same way.

"What--"

"Congratulations, James." Severus said and James immediately beamed at him.

Severus felt his face flush at the memory. He covered his face with his hands letting out a heavy sigh as he just stared up at the ceiling in the Potter residence. A couple of months and now they're spending the summer together. Honestly-

"What am I doing?"

Chapter End Notes

A/N: Please review

Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

My torturer became my remedy

Chapter Notes

A/N: Thanks for all the reviews

I struggled with this last chapter, more than I thought I would. I think I was too focused on what I thought would be expected from this last chapter but then I just decided to do what felt right. Once again, all my plans went right into the trash and I went a different route

This chapter is brought to you courtesy of Shuffle. I like pairing songs to fics and my track list decided to gift me with All Night Long by Beyoncé and I think it works really well.

I know, not My Everything by Barry White. But the tone for this last chapter needed to be different for me to give it the ended that I wanted.

Usual apologies

Disclaimer: read previous chapters

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“Just, shout if you need anything dear.” Euphemia said, placing a hand on Severus’ shoulder and the boy gave a stiff nod, “We’ll be in the parlour room right across the hall.”

He looked up at her one more time, the older woman’s kind smile almost putting him at ease for a moment until-

“James. Come on.”

James’ eyes went wide, “But-“

“James.” Fleamont said more sternly from his place by the door, “Give them a moment.”

James looked at Severus, the Slytherin’s hand still clutched tightly in his own since the moment that they sat down. He didn’t want to leave Severus alone with these, people, these-... complete strangers but.

“I’ll be fine, just go.” Severus said flatly his eyes focused on the two sitting on the couch right across from them. James’ lips pursed into a tight line but he relented.

“Fine.” He said before quickly leaning in to press a kiss on the raven’s cheek. Severus looked

away from the two on the couch to glare at him, “Stop that-“

“I’ll be right outside.” James said so earnestly that it threw Severus for a moment. The concern that seemed to glow in those hazel eyes made him pause and stopped him from telling Potter to stop treating him like some wilting damsel in distress. Instead he just looked down at their hands.

“I know. So just go.”

James finally got up and let go of his hand. Euphemia gave him another soft smile, her hand clenching ever so slightly on his shoulder before she followed after her son. James almost stopped in the door when Fleamont urged him further out and Euphemia shut the door behind them.

It was silent in the room for a moment, so different from the night before when he and Sirius were arguing because Severus beat him at yet another game of chess while James whined about wanting to have the raven to himself for a change.

“You and the Potter boy seem close.” The man suddenly said and Severus’ eyes snapped up to lock onto him in sharp focus. He had regal features, dark bone straight hair tied up at the bottom of his neck streaked with white and grey hair and dark eyes very much like his own. His posture was impossibly straight as he let his hand rest on the armrest of the couch, the robes he wore were a lush emerald green with black and silver accents. Severus could see the gold chain of a watch hanging from his pocket and a bright silver broach on his left breast pocket with the Prince family crest.

The man almost paused at the way the boy stared back at him, looking him right in the eye without even the slightest hint of hesitation. Severus’ eyes held no fear, no anger. Just a hint of confusion as his eyes narrowed ever so slightly.

“You don’t have a contract with him, do you?”

“Contract?”

“A marriage contract.”

“No.” Severus said simply and the woman beside him shifted a bit in her seat. She’d been silent since the moment that they all stepped into the room but her eyes stayed fixed on Severus, never leaving him for even a moment as her hands clenched tightly in her lap.

She had brown hair tied up and out of her face also streaked with grey and silver hair though much less prominently than the man. Green eyes that reminded him of Lily but not quite as bright and a heart shaped face that Severus imagined would seem quite warm if not for the circumstances or the way she kept worrying her bottom lip, pulling it into her mouth. She wore black and red robes, a sort of velvet floral pattern all over the skirt. There was a silver ring on her left ring finger and a pendant hanging around her neck against her chest. The pendant had the Prince family crest on it as well.

“He’s clearly smitten with you.” She tried a smile pulling at her lips before retreating only to come back when Severus’ eyes were on her again, “You’re sixteen. It wouldn’t at all be strange to be engaged already.”

Severus knew that. Narcissa is engaged to Lucius and she’s only a year older than him. Though from what Severus understands, she hadn’t exactly chosen to be engaged at the age of twelve.

A frown pulled at Severus’ lips, he didn’t know how he was supposed to respond to that or even if he was meant to. He understood what they were doing. Social niceties, making small talk before

actually getting down to dropping whatever bombshell they were surely about to drop on him once he was comfortable.

Severus has never had the patience for that sort of thing.

“Why are you here?”

The woman blinked and almost seemed to shrink back into her seat. The man took in an audible breath before he spoke.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

It's been weeks since Severus left.

Weeks since the Princes took him away.

Initially James hadn't taken it well. He understood though.

He understood that his parents had had no choice but to let him go, there's nothing they could do to stop the Princes from taking Severus away. They had no legal right. They were Severus' grandparents and his mother is the one that called for them to begin with.

It had been agonizing, staying in the parlour room with his parents while Sirius sat nervously in one of the armchairs in the corner, waiting for the Princes to discuss whatever it is that they wanted to discuss with the Slytherin. James hadn't even really understood what they could possibly want with the raven at first. It was right as he was pacing across the room, doing his best to wear out the carpet that his father explained.

“James, do you remember the rumours about the Prince family line?”

James had frowned, “What rumours?”

Sirius who was still nervously sitting in the corner frowned as he spoke, “Mum used to rant about that a bit. They said the Prince line died out, the youngest daughter was disowned. Most of them said she was dead or thought to be dead anyway.”

Euphemia seemed to cringe a bit from her spot at the table near the side beside her husband, “She isn't dead.”

James stopped, “What does that have to do with anything?”

“James,” Fleamont said, “I know you're worried about Severus right now but think; what would the Princes want with a half-blood boy?”

Sirius seemed to catch on faster as he let out a gasp, “Wait... so Snape is-“

“His mother is Eileen Prince, the long-lost heir of the Prince bloodline. Which would make him, the new heir of Prince.”

“No way.” Sirius said in disbelief while James started pacing again.

“Why was she disowned to begin with?”

Euphemia shared a look with Fleamont, “She married a muggle.”

“Bloody hell!”

“Sirius language.”

“She married a muggle so she wasn’t good enough for them anymore.” James shook his head, “What does that have to do with them seeing him now? He’s still a half-blood, it’s not like that’s changed.”

Fleamont sighed, “James stop your fretting and come sit down.”

“I’m not *fretting*, I just don’t get why he had to talk to them alone.”

“Sit down and we’ll tell you.” His father said with finality and James frowned, his parents looked oddly serious so he walked over and sat on the vacant chair nearest to his mother. Sirius watched on, his lips pursed as Euphemia spoke.

“When I met with Severus’ mother, to ask that he stay for the summer she asked that I do her a favour. She wanted me to pass a letter on to the Princes. I’m not sure what the letter said but they wrote back the very next day, informing us of the fact that they’d be coming to collect the boy in a few days. I didn’t think that they’d end up coming early, I should’ve warned him earlier.”

“You knew this would...” James stopped when his brain caught up with the words, “They’ve come to collect him? Collect him for what?”

“The letter they sent was ministry stamped. They have guardianship over him now. In all likelihood, he’s going to be living with them from now on.”

James gaped, “But – No! they can’t do that can they? Just take him away.”

“Yes, they can-“

“But he just got here! They’ve been ignoring him for who knows how long and now what, he’s suddenly good enough for them?!”

“James, calm down. It’s not like you’re never going to see him again. He might not be able to stay for the summer, but surely you’ll be able to see him at school.”

“But-“ James huffed in frustration, “That’s not... why do they have to take him away right now? I haven’t even shown him the stables, or the meadow-”

“Jimmy.” Euphemia said as she placed a hand on his, “If we could stop them we would, but we don’t have the legal right. They’re his grandparents, it wouldn’t be right for us to try. And besides, he could always come over some other time. I promise once things settle down, first thing, I’ll contact lady Prince and see about getting you two some time together.”

“But... he just got here.“

Fleamont gave him a soft smile as he reached over to put a hand on James’ shoulder, “I know it doesn’t seem like it right now, but this is a good thing. Severus should be able to be around his grandparents. Everything will work out, don’t worry.”

Just then, they heard the door to the sitting room on the other side of the hall open. James was the first one out of his seat and stopped just as the Princes stepped out of the room with Severus just

behind them.

It's the look on the raven's face that got him, an emptiness in those dark eyes that he hasn't seen in months. The way he had his bottom lip pulled into his mouth before he quickly remembered himself and let it go.

"Sev-"

"We'll be taking our leave now." Lord Prince suddenly said, his head high and his shoulders back with his arms folded behind his back. "Lord and Lady Potter, we thank you for caring for Severus in our stead."

Fleamont cleared his throat, "It was no trouble. In fact, Severus is more than welcome to come back to visit whenever he likes."

"Next week maybe." Euphemia tried giving the boy a smile when he looked up at her, "He's hardly been here for very long. I'm sure the boys would like to spend some more time together before school starts again."

"Unfortunately, I'm not sure if that will be possible." The man said without so much as a shred of emotion on his face, before inclining his head ever so slightly. "Thank you again."

James' eyes widened when lady Prince took hold of Severus' shoulders and started steering him towards the door when-

"Wait! What about your stuff?!" Sirius suddenly cried out as he slipped passed James' parents. Lord Prince gave the boy a sharp look, eyes narrowing ever so slightly.

"We'll provide him with anything he could possibly need."

"Not everything." Sirius shot forward and grabbed a hold of Severus' wrist, surprising them all greatly as the Animagus dragged him towards the stairs.

"Black what're you-"

"You need your stuff." Sirius said clearly as he kept dragging the raven up the stairs, "James come help."

James blinked and then almost smiled as he followed them up the stairs with Severus hissing at the Animagus the whole time.

"Sirius!" Euphemia started to scold while the Princes just stared on incredulously.

"We'll be right back!"

Around the corner and up to the third door on the left, Sirius opened the door and dragged Severus inside eventually letting go of his wrist.

"What in Salazar's name do you think you're-"

Severus was cut off when two arms suddenly wrapped around him from behind and he could feel James head rest on his shoulder.

"They can't take you." James mumbled out and Severus let out a sigh, shutting his eyes for a brief moment.

“Potter, stop acting like a child-“

“I’m not-“

“I don’t have a choice.” Severus said quietly while Black slipped into the attached bathroom. “If... if I could stay, I would but they have an order from the ministry and-and they have my mother as well.”

James looked up at that, “Your mother?” he almost let go so he could turn the other around to look at him but Severus stopped him short, taking hold of the arm around his chest and keeping it there as he spoke quietly.

“She’s... unwell. She hasn’t been well for a long time and my father... he’s a monster, he’s been a monster since the day that I was born. The Princes... my grandparents found out about my mother’s health and about my father and they got an order from the ministry; had her extracted from my father to have evaluations done on her at St Mungo’s, from there they got power of authority over her because apparently, she wasn’t in the mental or physical state to be making any legal decisions on her own... they enacted a divorce on her behalf, took her to the Prince estate and gained guardianship over me.”

“Severus-“

“No, this... it’s a good thing. My mother will have the opportunity to be well again and I won’t have to deal with my bastard of a father anymore.” Severus scoffed, though it sounded incredibly forced, “It’s a good thing, it seems fortune has finally decided to smile on me. I should thank you. If your mother hadn’t asked to see my mine none of this would have happened.”

James didn’t know what to say to that so he didn’t say anything as he hugged Severus again. The raven opened his eyes and took in a deep breath.

“Honestly Potter, you’re acting like I’ve just been diagnosed with a blood curse or something.”

“I don’t want you to leave.” James admitted, “Things were just getting better between us.”

Severus stared at the wall, but kept his hands on James’ arm. “You’ll see me at school in a few months. The Princes have decided to let me finish at Hogwarts.”

James sighed, “It’s not the same thing.”

“Why? Because you won’t be able to try and sneak into my room like last night?”

He could feel James flush, “If you’d let me stay we could have spent the night together.”

“I already told you that I’m not sharing a bed with you.”

“It wasn’t about the bed, you spent the whole night playing chess with Sirius, I didn’t get you alone for even one moment.”

“Only because the mutt is a sore loser.” Severus then pulled out of the Gryffindor’s grasp and turned to face him.

“I should go.”

“But Sev-“

“If I don’t go down there they might come up here themselves, or send aurors after me and I’m not

sure which would be worse.”

James frowned, “Really?”

Severus shook his head as he looked away, “They didn’t have an heir before but now they do. I have... responsibilities now. That’s why lord Prince said that I wouldn’t be able to come back for the rest of the holidays.”

James started to glare, “So they just want to use you? They need an heir so now you’re good enough-“

“Potter-“

“What gives them the right-“

“Oh honestly you dunderhead calm down. Don’t go getting worked up like some noble twat trying to defend my honour.” Severus said brushing his hair behind his ear, “I’m glad to be leaving. This could be something better for me and my mother... I’m just... I suppose, I was looking forward to watching you try and fail to impress me for the rest of the summer.”

At that James started to smile, “What makes you think I would’ve failed?”

“Previous experience at watching you try and fail to impress Lily.”

“I was never really trying to impress her. I’m not sure what I would’ve done if she’d actually said yes when I asked her out. I just did it because I knew it would get your attention and annoy her.”

Severus rolled his eyes, “Of course you did.”

“I swear I had all sorts of things planned. I was sure that by the end of the summer, you’d finally like me back or at least... you’d stop calling me Potter. But now-“ James expression fell and almost turned into a pout, Severus let out a sigh reaching out to take the Gryffindor’s hand.

“I’ll see you at school.”

James didn’t say anything to that until Severus leaned up to press a kiss against his cheek and left the room.

“Goodbye James.”

James turned to watch him go. That was the last time he saw the other teen.

It was days before he started to feel better about it. Sirius kept him distracted, but it was hard when he couldn’t stop thinking about Severus. He tried writing to the Slytherin a couple of times but he never got a response. His parents tried writing to the Princes, all they got in return was some vague response about how Severus was occupied with his duties as heir and couldn’t be disturbed.

As the weeks went by he got better at distracting himself. He tried to focus on the fact that his parents were right. Severus was right. Once school started, they could see each other again and when school finally ended, they’d both be of age and surely Severus could see him whenever he wanted. Sirius had unhelpfully supplied that the Princes could in fact try to bar Severus from seeing James with the threat of disownment if they really wanted to. Fleamont had swatted Sirius on the back of the head for that one.

He kept himself occupied with pranks and games and swimming in the pond and going to Diagon

Alley. His parents took them out to dinner a few times and then they went to go see a show in Hogsmeade a few weeks after that. Peter was on holiday with his mum. Remus came to visit for a few days as well and for a while everything felt normal again.

It was just before the summer holidays ended that things took a turn.

They were out swimming again when Euphemia suddenly called them inside and handed James a sealed letter from the house of Prince.

Lord James Charlus Potter

You are hereby cordially invited to the inauguration of Severus Prince as the heir and lord to the House of Prince.

James had been ecstatic.

Sirius had gotten an invitation as well, along with his parents so they would be going as well, but James could barely focus on that. Sirius had rolled his eyes hard when James went through his wardrobe looking for his best robes to wear before just begging his parents for new ones.

“You know Snape won’t care about what you’re wearing.”

“But the Princes will. I don’t want them to have an excuse to try and keep me away from him again.”

“So you’re trying to impress the in-law’s?” Sirius shook his head, “Merlin, you’re whipped.”

Euphemia, who had been walking by the boys’ room at the time, popped in to swat Sirius in the back of the head for that one.

Now, they’re leaving for the Prince estate. James was nervous. He wondered what Severus had been doing with the Princes, why he could never write back to any of his letters, if Severus was happy. He wondered and desperately hoped that Severus hadn’t changed in the few weeks that they spent apart. He hoped Severus hadn’t changed his mind on the odd sort of friendship that they’d developed over the past few months. James was nervous. So he didn’t do more than glare at Sirius’ teasing and just let his mother fret over him while he was getting dressed.

They climbed into the coach, James tried not to nervously tug and pull at his hair. It took forever to get it tame enough not to look like its usual chaotic mess and he was sure that one slight pull could undo everything in a matter of seconds. He was staring out the window trying to keep his breathing steady when he suddenly felt a hand on his shoulder.

Sirius was smiling at him.

“You alright mate?”

“Yeah, I’m fine.” James said quickly and Sirius shook his head.

“It’s just Snape James, I don’t see what you’re so worried about.”

James sighed, “Padfoot, don’t start-“

“All I mean, is that Snape likes you. You don’t have to get so worked up about it.”

James paused, “How do you know-“

“You got your own private invitation. They just listed me as your parents plus one. Rude prat.” Sirius huffed folding his arms across his chest, “My point is, if he didn’t want you there, you wouldn’t have gotten anything. So calm down.”

XX

Severus stared back at his reflection for a moment.

He looked a little different but, for the most part he thought he looked decent. The elves disappeared just after helping him get dressed, lady Prince promised to check in on him a bit later and lord Prince made sure to tell him to come and see him before the guests arrive.

He has some time, so Severus decided to take a few minutes and snuck out of his room.

Down the hall, up the stairs and over to the last room at the end of the hall. Most of the house was occupied with the party so he could get away with sneaking off for a bit. He wasn’t going that far anyway.

Severus quietly opened the door and peered inside.

“Mother.”

“Severus.” He heard a soft voice call out and he stepped into the room. Shutting the door behind him before looking up at the figure sitting in the middle of the bed, with light blue sheets and entirely too many pillows helping the figure sit propped up against the bed.

Severus smiled softly.

She looked leagues better than when he saw her a few weeks ago. Much better than any time he saw her after coming home for the holidays. Her skin wasn’t so pale anymore, it was healthier though her frame still seemed a bit fragile and weak. Her eyes were much brighter and alert and her hair while down was combed neatly out of her face.

She smiled when she saw him and beckoned him closer.

“Look at you, mother’s outdone herself.” Eileen started, “Come closer.”

Severus quickly hurried over and her smile grew as she held out her hands and pulled him into a weak hug, he held her back tightly before pulling back.

“You’re looking good today.”

“Hush now, today isn’t about me.” Eileen said as she tugged a bit at his collar and made sure his cuffs were straight, “I was worried father might put you in all black robes but I’m glad they decided differently, the bits of red really are lovely.”

Severus flushed ever so slightly while Eileen tugged at his arm to urge him to sit on the bed, “Now, what did you want to talk about. I’m sure father wouldn’t let you come up here on your own so close to your confirmation.”

Severus shook his head, “I just wanted to see you.”

Eileen nodded, "It's a big day isn't it? You must be nervous."

Severus didn't say anything as his mother continued, "You shouldn't be. Mother and Father will do most of the talking. Most of the pureblood lot just want the opportunity to ogle you for a bit, but don't let them intimidate you. If they try you can just have one of the elves apparate them to the nearest swamp. It's what I did with Crabbe on my sixteenth."

Severus laughed and Eileen chuckled a but it quickly turned into a cough. Severus reached out for some tissues and handed them to her, "Mother--"

"Severus don't fuss, I'm fine." She said as she wiped her mouth before looking up at the boy and smiling, "Since we have a bit of time, why don't you tell me a story."

Stories. These days he's always telling her stories about school and the few friends he's managed to make. The good things and... some of the bad. Before, back at Spinners End, there never seemed to be time or opportunity just to talk to his mother. Now they talk almost every day as long as his grandparents don't have him occupied. Eileen insisted and Severus was just happy to finally have a peaceful moment to speak with her without fear of his father coming home and interrupting them.

"About what?"

"About school or... James, you said they sent word back about attending didn't you?"

Severus sighed, "Yes."

"Are you excited to see him?"

"Mother--"

"You're grandmother says he's quite handsome--"

"He's an arrogant toad."

"So you keep saying, but you haven't said that you didn't like it."

Severus gave his mother a very tired look and Eileen scoffed, "Are you saying you don't?"

Severus looked away, "I don't know exactly how I feel about him. He used to be terrible to me before and then he tells me he's loved me this whole time."

Eileen nodded, "Are you afraid, that he'll be terrible to you again?"

"Yes... no... I don't know."

"Just because things didn't start off so great between you, doesn't mean they'll end that way." A soft sigh, "You know, your father--"

"Mother, please--"

"No, let me finish Severus. He was wonderful in the beginning; kind and thoughtful with the loveliest sense of humour but there was a darkness to him. Anger and a roughness that scared me sometimes. I could see it but, I kept ignoring it because I couldn't stop thinking of the person he was at the start. Things were so good at first... Happy beginnings don't always lead to a happy end." Eileen sighed again, "I don't regret my relationship with him, how could I when he gave me you? I only regret that I stayed too long. If you really want nothing to do with this boy then by all

means stay away from him, but don't let my situation with your father scare you from falling in love."

"Mother--"

Eileen reached out to take his hand, "More than anything I want you to be happy Severus, if James can do that for you then that's perfect. But if he doesn't then have the elves apparate him to a swamp, that should keep him away for a while."

Severus scoffed before looking down at their joined hands, "He's been trying very hard to impress me, stay on my good side. We haven't gotten into a real fight in ages he's always being so careful. But I'm still not sure."

"It sounds like you don't trust him. That's not a problem, it's only a problem if you think that you won't be able to trust him ever. Severus, if you can't forgive him for the things that he did and you can't trust him in the future. Then it's best not to get involved with him at all. You can't be happy with someone you can't trust." Eileen gave his hand a slight squeeze, "Can you forgive him Severus? Will you ever be able to trust him?"

Severus bit his lip when the clock on the wall suddenly chimed and he jumped before letting out a soft breath.

Eileen smiled, "Time for you to go. Quickly before your grandfather comes looking for you."

"Yes mother." Severus said moving forward to press a kiss on Eileen's cheek and she kissed him back.

"I hope you have a lovely time Severus."

XX

Severus was using every last shred of composure he had in his body to stop himself from laughing, but it was very very hard.

Lord and Lady Prince led him around the ball room. As always with a hand gently urging him along between his shoulder blades before they came to a stop. A mandatory part of the affair after he was first introduced and the first toast for the evening had been given. They had to take him around for one lap, parade him among the pureblood elite for one round and then he'd be allowed to wander off and left to his own devices until the end of the party a bit later. The whole experience was excruciating as he had to endure being looked down on by the hundreds of pureblood elitists that moved about the room. But mother Katherine and father Edmund the experience just a bit more bearable.

"Meredith and Frederik Corbyn, it is simply wonderful to see you. I'm so happy you could attend our little gathering." Mother Katherine said with a smile, though the tightness around her lips and the disdain in her eyes made it very clear to Severus that she was in fact not happy that they could attend.

"Well, it's the confirmation of your new heir Katherine. How could we ever miss it?" the brunette wearing an extravagant blue gown with silver embroidering said giving a sufficiently polite smile in return, "Isn't that right Frederik?"

“Why, yes of course. Especially since, by all accounts, you didn’t have a known heir until a few weeks ago.” The grey-haired man said with a barely concealed sneer as his eyes fell on Severus and Severus just made sure that he met the man’s eyes defiantly. “Where have you been hiding him?”

“Oh dear friend, you’re prying a bit too closely now aren’t you?” Father Edmund said, his look of restrained annoyance just as flawlessly hidden as his wife’s as he let out a soft chuckle, “After all, one must never reveal all of their secrets.”

“However if you must know, our dear Eileen married a muggle a few years ago. They recently went through a very amicable divorce and so she’s returned home and brought our grandson with her.”

Amicable. Severus resisted the urge to scoff.

They gave Tobias exactly two choices when Eileen was taken from Spinners End. Sign the divorce papers or be one of the very few muggles to spend the rest of their life in Azkaban under charges of domestic abuse and abuse and neglect of a magical child.

He glanced over towards mother Katherine, keeping all hints of concern from his face. They’d spoken to Severus at length about his situation with his mother, and decided that while they would keep the more sensitive details of his and his mother’s situation to themselves; it would be best to be honest about the more overt details. No sense in lying about his blood status, that would just give the vultures more reason to go digging.

“Severus Prince a pleasure to meet you lord and lady Corbyn.”

“Indeed.” Meredith said with a tight smile of her own, “So, you’re a half-blood. Well, at least you seem to have retained some of your mother’s pedigree.”

“He’s also quite gifted.” Father Edmund said his eyes gleaming in a way that Severus knew meant he was more than just a bit irritated, “A master brewer, just like his mother. Exceptional grades at Hogwarts and quite the gifted spell caster.”

“Is that so?” Frederik asked and Edmund answered.

“Oh yes, we’re very proud of him.”

“Oh hush, Edmund. You mustn’t go on and on like that, I’m sure Severus is quite embarrassed, prattling on about your *brilliant half-blood grandson*. We simply must change the subject.” Katherine said with a slightly more genuine smile aimed at Severus before looking up at the Corbyn’s and she blinked, “Oh, Meredith, how is your son doing? Still stuck in second year at Durmstrang?”

Meredith’s expression visibly soured and Frederik’s lips pursed in displeasure.

“He’s fine.”

Katherine continued.

“It’s really quite impressive, isn’t it dear? Durmstrang allows its students to repeat their years as many times as they require even after the age of twenty. How marvellous.”

“Oh absolutely.” Edmund said, “It’s a pity. Severus could have tutored young Anthony for his studies, but with all his advanced classes that just wouldn’t be possible.”

“Ravenclaw is he?” Frederik sneered.

“Slytherin actually.” Severus answered coolly and Katherine beamed in the most exaggerated way, “Top of his class and already plans on getting his potions mastery once he graduates. It’s all very exciting. Oh, listen to me. Now I’m the one that’s prattling, how undignified.”

“Katherine, we should be moving on.” Edmund said and Katherine blinked.

“Of course, so many more people to see.” She said as she urged Severus to follow after his grandfather before calling back in a tinkering voice, “It was lovely seeing you both. Give our regards to Anthony. We’ll be sure to attend any celebrations once he finally graduates. Come along Severus.”

“Yes, mother Katherine.”

They were a few feet away when Edmund spoke quietly, “Ever the little viper, aren’t you dear?”

“They were asking for it. Really, Severus might be a half-blood, but they have a lot of nerve considering their pureblood heir is little short of an absolute failure.” She looked over to Severus and lowered her voice. “You should have seen him at the last Yuletide Ball held at the ministry Severus; cackling like a deranged ape and stuffing his face with cream puffs, it was atrocious.”

Severus let out a scoff when Katherine let out a soft breath, “Brace yourself Edmund.”

He could hear Edmund let out a quiet huff as they were approached by a new couple, both tall and very pale, pitch black hair for the woman and blonde hair for the man. Dressed in purple and green, the man’s robes matched his partners. Severus was struck by the woman’s eyes, a sharp piercing blue while the man had square shaped glasses over eyes.

“Oh Katherine, it’s been far too long.” She moved forward and Katherine moved forward to accept the embrace.

“Dorcas Everly, lovely as always to see you, you’re looking spectacular.”

“Not as good as you, just glowing with the arrival of your new heir, aren’t you?” Dorcas said before bringing those sharp blue eyes over to Severus, “And you young man, I’ve been waiting for a moment to speak with you. Dorcas Everly, this is my husband Patrick. Very nice to meet you.” She held out her hand, before Severus could reach out to take it, he felt a very subtle tap on his shoulder from his grandmother and simply bowed his head instead.

“A pleasure to meet you as well Lord and Lady Everly.”

Father Edmund had warned him, about certain tricks some of the more scheming attendees of the party could have. One being legillimens via touch. They told him to be careful about who he touched though they would try to make sure they warned him. Katherine was quite skilled with occlumency so she made sure to shake hands and give hugs whenever it was necessary.

Dorcas’ expression visibly fell as she simply pulled back to wrap her hands around her husband’s arm.

“Of course.” She said before bringing her gaze to Katherine, “We didn’t see you at Matilda Holt’s Spring Banquet, I was surprised to receive an invitation concerning your grandson’s confirmation when you’ve been so scarce to make an appearance.”

“Oh, you know we like to keep ourselves occupied. We sent Matilda our regards.”

“Hmm,”

“It’s surprising that you’ve decided to name this boy your heir, so soon after Eileen’s supposed divorce.” Patrick said with a cool stare and Edmund gave the barest of shrugs.

“Why stall out on the inevitable?”

“Where is Eileen?” Dorcas asked, “It’s a bit odd that she wouldn’t attend her own son’s confirmation.”

“Mother’s feeling under the weather.” Severus explained simply, and the two looked at him with the slightest hint of disdain as he spoke, “It’s best for her to rest for the time being.”

“Oh, I should hope that it’s nothing serious?” the tone in her voice made the concern on her face seem very dubious.

“Eileen’s always been a bit frail. You know that Dorcas.” Katherine said lightly, “Besides, there’s no need to bother her with this little affair. She knows the position her son holds.”

“Well, if only she’d been that concerned of *her* position before she conceived and then married.” Dorcas said just as lightly. “It really is a tragedy, isn’t it dear?”

“Yes, quite.” Patrick supplied as he took a sip from his wine glass.

“Well, you know what they say about the folly of youth,” Edmund started with his lips pulling into that vicious smirk, “I’m sure you agree, after all Ester’s unfortunate mishap was quite tragic as well.”

“Yes, quite.” Katherine said mimicking the same tone Patrick used before, “How is your daughter doing Dorcas? Last I heard she was hiding away in Stefan Ludwig’s backyard cottage. I hope his wife hasn’t discovered her yet. It can be such a delicate situation, sneaking about with a married man.”

“Oh, she found out ages ago dear.” Edmund supplied, “I heard lady Ludwig was alerted to the baby’s cries in the middle of the night a week after Ester gave birth. Of course, there’s a chance Stefan’s brother might be responsible. Apparently he’d been making frequent visits to the cottage over the winter. Yes, very tragic indeed.”

“Hmm.” Dorcas and Patrick were giving them the darkest glare and Katherine just gave them a charming smile, “Well, we should finish our rounds. Severus has brewing to do in the morning and I don’t want to keep him up for too long.”

“It was lovely seeing you, do give our regards Ester. Caring for an illegitimate child can be quite taxing I’ve been told.” Edmund said as he started walking, “Come along Severus.”

“Yes father Edmund.”

They were a few feet away when Katherine spoke, “Who’s the viper now?”

Edmund growled low in his throat, “I told you I didn’t want them here.”

Katherine sighed, “It would’ve looked odd not to invite them. I didn’t think they’d actually show.” She then looked over to Severus again, “Last I heard there was an ugly custody dispute going on over Ester’s new born with lady Ludwig threatening a divorce of her own. I’m surprised they’d have the gall to even bring up Eileen’s divorce.”

“Patrick’s always been an arrogant imbecile.”

“The worst kind of imbecile.”

Severus scoffed and Katherine gave him a warm smile, “I promise we’re almost done. Then you can run off and look for the Potter boy.”

And then Severus flushed, “I’m not going to look for him.”

Katherine shook her head, “I saw him staring at you earlier. He hasn’t taken his eyes off you for a second.” She paused, “I really am sorry, that you couldn’t have spent more time with him over the summer. But under the circumstances it just wouldn’t have been possible.”

Severus resisted the urge to touch his hair.

“Maybe you could invite him over next summer or Easter. I want just family for Christmas, but he’s more than welcome any other time.”

Edmund looked back at them. A slight frown on his lips, Severus let out a soft sigh.

In the past few weeks he’d been learning things, etiquette and manners; which the Princes learned he didn’t need to much help with. Prince customs and his various responsibilities as the new heir of the household. He’d gotten the time to talk to his mother and just learn to be around her without the aura of fear that his father always created around them. He got to know his grandparents a bit as well.

Father Edmund was strict, quiet but also kind. Mother Katherine said he was a bit impulsive though, he had a slight temper and Severus had seen some of that when he saw his grandfather interacting with family associates that would stop by the manor a few times. Watched as he fired a potioneer from one of the breweries they held stock in, he brewed a vial of dreamless sleep draught incorrectly and it gave its user nightmares. Though even Severus agreed that it had been a mistake that couldn’t be ignored, seeing his grandfather’s temper flare up so quickly left him feeling just a bit anxious around the man.

Most of the time, he was composed; stoic. Severus admired that, and every so often Edmund’s eyes would crinkle at the corners and he’d smile at Severus, when they were reading in the study or Severus was helping him tend to the dragons in the stables out back.

Once Severus was standing at the head of a stall keeping an Antipodean Opaleye. Leaning over the trough to feed it when the creature moved up and licked his face. He pulled a face and the stupid thing seemed to almost smile at him before it started eating and Severus just huffed-

“Trying to get into your good graces already I see.” Edmund said softly as he walked up to Severus in his work boots, dark pants and shirt while the rest of the stable hands worked around them.

“Hector, has a tendency to make eyes at the staff, trying to get them to give him more food and more attention. He’s quite a handful.”

“Well, that’s not going to work on me.” Severus muttered quietly and the dragon almost seemed to understand him as it looked up and huffed before eating again. Almost like it was saying ‘*we’ll see*’ before it carried on.

Edmund chuckled softly his eyes wrinkling that way that they always did and he reached out to brush Severus’ hair behind his ear. The boy tensed for a split second and Edmund paused.

“Severus, we spoke very briefly about the situation with Eileen and... your father.” Severus looked

away from his grandfather as he continued, "I never asked how you felt about, all of this."

"All of what?"

"This, being here. I expect that you must be upset with us for what happened with your mother and the fact that we forced her to leave. If not because of what we did then because of what you were forced to endure with *him*." Edmund let out a quiet sigh, "I won't pretend like I was happy about Eileen's choice. I won't pretend like the fact that he was a muggle wasn't part of the reason why I was so... enraged. I'm not sure if your mother told you but she was already set to marry before she got involved with Tobias. He was the son of one of our associates, what Katherine and I, at the time, thought was a good match for her. Eileen didn't agree. She's always been spirited you see; strong-willed and stubborn, full of pride. From what I understand, after she met your father she saw the chance at finding love for herself and ever the Slytherin, reached out and grabbed it. Did everything she could to keep it, refused to let it go even after realising that she shouldn't."

It was Edmund's turn to look away, "I mistakenly thought I could force her hand, told her if she left we would disown her, lock her out of the family vaults but she persisted and then married him. I had the goblins at Gringotts lock her out of the vaults, refused to speak with her. It wasn't until a few months later that I realised the foolishness of my own impulsivity and reinstated the vaults again, but Eileen never came back to Gringotts to try and access them. She never contacted us and so we thought she wanted nothing to do with us and honestly, why would she? It was a few years later that we found out about your birth. I still couldn't bring myself to contact her, Katherine was beside herself. Instead we watched the ministry, we watched Hogwarts, discovered that once you started you were doing exceptionally well in your studies and it seemed to us that, since you were doing so well we had no right to intrude."

Severus then looked up at the man before he spoke, "How did you watch Hogwarts?"

"I'm sure you're aware of Professor Slughorn's susceptibility to verbal and material encouragement." Edmund said a bit dryly and Severus couldn't help but scoff, "We had him get a hold of your school records, send them to us after every term. We never gave him a reason, never let on anything about our relation. Even as we asked about your well-being. I'm still greatly annoyed that he somehow missed the signs of the neglect that you suffered under." Edmund's voice dropped slightly before he took in a soft breath, "We thought you were both... fine. But then we received Eileen's letter. She feared that she wasn't long for this world and wanted to make sure we'd care for you in her stead."

Edmund turned around and sat down on the bench beside Hector's stable, Severus followed to sit as well. "The second we got the letter I had contacts called from the ministry and St Mungo's, made a few unpleasant agreements and went to collect her. Then arranged to get guardianship over you. It was all very sudden I'm sure, coming here and having all of this just thrust into your hands. When we collected you at the Potter house I hadn't even stopped to think about that, I just wanted both you and Eileen here. And when I saw you, Circe, you look so much like your mother." Edmund looked up at him and smiled but that look quickly faded, "We never asked you if you wanted any of this but we forced it on you anyway."

"I do." Severus answered and he looked up at the boy.

"Severus, your mother will be cared for regardless of what happens and you will be as well. But if you don't want to be our heir then that's well within your rights. I tried to force Eileen's hand before, I won't try to do that again. You can speak frankly." Severus looked down at his hands, biting his lip briefly before Edmund spoke, "I'm sure, you might be upset about being forced to leave the Potter House so soon."

Severus' head snapped up at that Edmund gave him a small smile, "Katherine was right, he seemed smitten with you and with you there; I just assumed you had a contract, though I was relieved when you said you didn't."

Severus frowned, "Why?"

Edmund shook his head, "You just came into our lives, I'm not comfortable with the prospect of you leaving so soon." Then the older man shook his head, "He's been sending you letters."

Severus blinked, "He has?"

"Every other day since you came here."

And then Severus sighed, "Of course he has."

"I've had the elves keep them, you can ask for them if you'd like to read them, but you can't write back. Customs you see, no contact with the outside world for a month before your confirmation."

Severus wasn't sure if he wanted to.

"I'll-I'll keep that in mind."

"How do you feel about the Potter boy? If you would, in fact, like for us to have a contract arranged-"

"No, no. Absolutely not."

"Why not?"

Because the arrogant twat would never let him live it down.

"Already claiming me for yourself Sev?"

He could almost hear him say.

Severus couldn't help but smile a little even as he shook his head.

"Our relationship isn't quite like that. I'm very aware of his affections for me but-"

"But?"

"I'm not sure if I feel the same."

Edmund nodded, "You're young, there's still time to decide. We'll stand by whichever decision you choose. I meant what I said Severus, I won't make the same mistake with you that I made with Eileen." He said with a smile as he reached out to brush Severus' hair aside again that time, he didn't tense as he smiled back.

Mother Katherine was warm, sweet, very kind... cunning. Father Edmund called her his viper because of her sharp tongue and how she had just as short a temper as he did sometimes, though most of the time to Severus she seemed very protective. Severus would usually be brewing under her supervision and learned whichever new spell she thought it prudent he should know. There was an incident a few weeks ago, when she was teaching him a bit of occlumency. He was being prepared for his confirmation ball, they wanted him to be able to put a few walls up just to protect himself from the prying eyes of their guests.

Severs sat in a chair in front of her as she pushed into his mind. He felt a light pressure on his head pushing in and felt a memory rushing to the forefront of his mind.

It was the night before he left the Potter house, James had snuck into his room.

“Potter, what the devil-“ Severus asked as he sat up in the bed as James quietly closed the door behind him.

“It’s insane that I get to have you over for the summer but then mother puts you in a room on the other side of the manor. Honestly what is that?!” James said as he walked over to the bed and then sat down at the edge by the Slytherin’s side.

“Why are you in here?”

“I wanted to spend more time with you.”

“It’s past midnight.”

“And I had to share you with Padfoot all day!” James said slumping back on the bed, “You know this really isn’t how I imagined things would go. I was hoping you would’ve softened up enough to let me sneak into your bed by now.”

“I arrived yesterday.”

“What’s your point?”

“That’s it, out!” Severus said getting out of the bed and dragging James off his bed and over towards the door, “Get out and hope to Merlin that I don’t decide to hex you for this later.”

“But Sev-“

“Out, you brainless prat!” he’d just gotten James out of the room and on the other side of the door but just as he was about to shut it the other wizard stopped him short.

“Wait!”

“What?” James was leaning against the door jab with a pout.

“Can I at least get a good night kiss?”

Severus slammed the door shut in his face.

Severus blinked.

Mother Katherine was giggling, he felt himself flush a horrible dark red as he brushed his hair behind his ear. She quickly shook her head.

“No, no Severus dear, please I’m sorry, I just-“ She gave him a smile just after composing herself a bit, “Persistent, isn’t he?”

“You have no idea.” Severus said quietly.

“Oh but its adorable. Are you sure you don’t want us to arrange a contract?”

“Very sure.” Severus said with a soft sigh, she started to frown a little. “But you do like him, don’t you Severus?”

“Yes?” Severus looked up at her, “He’s persistent, he’s been trying very hard lately, it’s just that things haven’t always been that way.”

“What do you mean?”

Severus paused, trying to decide on what he wanted to say, “We didn’t get along before. I was actually quite sure that I hated him, but now... I’m not sure.”

“You *hated* him. That’s a strong word.” She said before reaching out to take Severus’ hand, Severus jumped at the movement but she didn’t let go, “What changed between then and now?”

Severus looked down at the hand that held his own, “He told me he loved me.”

Katherine blinked, “My, that’s also quite a strong word. But he didn’t seem to before?”

“No.”

“Well how does he explain it?”

“He was trying to get my attention but didn’t know how. So he’d act out.”

“Act out how?”

“Pranks.” Severus said simply and with a hint of disdain, Katherine gave a scoff.

“Ah, he was pulling on your pigtails. He wouldn’t be the first boy that tried to evoke anger in the pursuit of love.”

“Something like that.” Severus said, resisting the urge to cringe. Katherine shook her head.

“Well you’re both very young, things like emotions can be... confusing. The more important thing is how you feel about each other now.”

“I don’t know how I feel. I was almost hoping this summer would help me understand but-”

Katherine paused, “You have plenty of time to think it through. You’ll see him at school. Don’t rush yourself.”

“Yes mother Katherine.”

He said with a nod and she smiled, “Now, let’s try again. This time when I push, I want you to try and push me back as hard as you can.”

Severus swallowed hard and took a deep breath.

“Are you ready?”

“Yes.”

Katherine looked right into Severus’ eyes. He felt that same pressure from before and so he tried to mimic that feeling as he pushed back.

“Good.”

Severus just kept breathing. The pressure increased, pushing in much harder this time. Pushing back was a little more difficult... actually, a lot more difficult. Severus’ hands clenched against his

knees. Suddenly Katherine gave in one very hard sudden push and-

Bright glowing yellow eyes. Almost glowing grey fur. Severus screamed, falling back against the creaking wooden floors. The creature growled and snarled, teeth bared and crouched ready to pounce when a large white stag seemed to come out of nowhere and forced it back. He sat frozen until the stag suddenly transformed right before him into a boy. Into James.

“Severus, run!”

Severus scrambled up to his feet, James grabbed hold of his arm and dragged him along as they ran through the old dilapidated house. A piercing growl echoed all around them, sounds of things breaking and Severus looked back to see the werewolf almost crashing into the wall as it rounded the corner and came after them.

He looked back when he felt another sharp tug, dragging him into a dark hole, a tunnel.

“Severus don’t stop!”

James called out urgently and they both crawled up the dark tunnel. The wolf tried to follow reaching up into the hole with one arm as far as it could reach. Severus screamed, James just kept pulling until they finally made it outside into the cold night air.

His breathing was harsh and erratic as he stumbled out of the hole. James didn’t stop though. He grabbed a hold of the raven’s arm and kept running and kept pulling until they both eventually collapsed beside the lake. The full moon reflecting off of the dark waters.

Severus was still trying to catch his breath when James suddenly pulled him in and wrapped his arms around him tightly. On instinct Severus held onto James as well, still breathing hard with his heart pounding in his ears as his eyes stared wide and unblinking into nothing.

“I’m sorry Severus... I swear I won’t let this every happen again. I swear I’ll protect you-“

Severus blinked and looked up to see that mother Katherine had gone pale as she stared at him with wide eyes.

Shit.

She wasn’t supposed to see that.

“A werewolf?!” she gasped in shock Severus swallowed hard.

“Mother Katherine-“

“EDMUND!” She got up and immediately headed for the doorway. Severus quickly got up to catch up.

“Mother Katherine, I-“

“You were both wearing school clothes, Severus. This happened at school?!”

Severus tried to think quickly, but he couldn’t lie to her.

“Yes.”

The look in her eyes wavered from shock to fear to concern and then...

Rage.

“EDMUND!”

Up the stairs and around the corner and then around another to the last room on the left. She went bursting into the study as Severus followed.

“EDMUND-“

“Katherine what on earth are you shouting about-“

“Severus is never to set foot in that blasted school again!”

Severus’ eyes went wide, “Mother Katherine, please.”

Edmund frowned as he rose from his seat behind the desk, “And why not?”

“He was attacked by a werewolf at school!”

Edmund’s eyes went wide, “A werewolf?”

“The Potter boy had to save him.” She said as she stepped closer to her husband, “Who knows what would have happened if he hadn’t. And with that... absolutely useless fool Slughorn – no. I refuse to let him go back.”

Edmund looked from his wife and then to his grandson. “Severus sit down.”

Severus took a deep breath and sat down on the couch.

“Katherine, you as well.”

She went to go and sit down beside the Severus, immediately taking his hand and Edmund sat on the couch facing them as he looked at the younger man.

“Exactly what happened?”

“It... It was a mistake.”

“A mistake?! Severus that thing could have-“

“That thing is one of Potter’s friends.”

“What?”

“He’s another student at school and yes he’s a werewolf,” He could already see his grandmother start screaming and his grandfather ranting and an entire auror brigade being sent to Hogwarts so he spoke quickly. “But he’s harmless, when he’s human. He’s really... a very nice person. Good and quite intelligent actually. He’s a bit of a coward but... he’d never willingly hurt anyone.”

“Severus-“

“I don’t...” Severus sighed, “I don’t want him getting into trouble over me. I don’t want him getting kicked out or going to Azkaban. I don’t want that on my conscience. So please just don’t do anything.”

Edmund’s lips pursed, “Severus, what happened?”

“It was a mistake, just a moronic prank. The wolf’s name is Remus Lupin. Sirius Black is one of his friends. He told me how to get into the place where Lupin spends his full moon’s every month. I promise, no one else knows and usually, he’s perfectly safe and far away from anyone he could hurt when he’s like that. I was absolutely foolish and listened to Black’s directions. I went to where Lupin was and that’s when it happened.”

“Severus, that wolf could have killed you or cursed you!” Katherine said clearly, “You can’t expect us to do nothing!”

“I know and a few months ago I would have been more than happy to let you rain hell down on the school but...” Severus bit his lip and then shook his head, “Lupin doesn’t deserve that.”

“And Sirius Black, this prank he pulled you expect us to forgive him for that?”

“No, because I haven’t either. Black is an impulsive idiot, but I see no sense in hanging on to a past that doesn’t benefit me. It happened, it’s over I just want to move on.”

Edmund frowned, “And this has nothing to do with both of them being Potter’s friends?”

Severus paused, “Potter... James, used to be just as bad as Sirius. He used to come after me almost every day. Ruined my books, picked fights with me, tried to humiliate me in front of the whole school.”

“Severus.” Mother Katherine said her eyes filled with anger, “That’s not how you described it earlier.”

“I know.”

“You said he loves you.”

“He says he does and over the past few months he’s been trying very hard to prove it. I wasn’t lying about that.” Severus sighed again, “He’s trying to prove how much he loves me and I want to let him try.”

“Why?”

“Because... no one’s ever tried before. No one’s been as devoted before, no one cared. He swears that he loves me, keeps promising that that will never change. I used to wonder what just a drop of that would feel like and he’s trying to give me an entire ocean. I want to let him try.”

“Severus, how do you know that you aren’t just confused?” Katherine asked, her hand going a bit tighter around his, “If this is your first... experience with another boy then-“

“It’s not.”

His grandmother blinked, “It’s not? There was someone before-“

“I’d really rather not talk about him.” Severus said, “He never hurt me or anything but... he’s different from James. Right now, James makes me feel,” He paused in thought looking away for a moment, “Good. He’s promised to make up for things that happened between us in the past and he’s been trying very hard so far. I want to keep letting him try.”

“Severus-“

“Mother Katherine, you said that I have time to decide on how I feel about him.” Severus then

looked over to his grandfather, “And father Edmund you said you wouldn’t try to force my hand.”

Edmund let out a heavy sigh as he shut his eyes, “Severus-“

“A few months ago I would’ve jumped at the opportunity to get rid of them, but right now... Right now, I want to finish at Hogwarts, I don’t want Lupin getting hurt and I want to let James try.”

Katherine let out a heavy sigh of her own, “And Sirius Black?”

“He’s an absolute idiot, but I don’t want him on my conscience either. Besides, he’s tolerable once you get used to him.” a small smile started creeping up onto Severus’ lips. Katherine’s lips pursed and Edmund just leaned back in his seat before the teen spoke. “Since they’ve all apologized, things have been different. I’ve been almost... happy.”

“And what if they change and things go back to the way they used to be?” Edmund asked and Severus shrugged.

“Then you’re more than welcome to have them all thrown in Azkaban for breaking my heart.”

Edmund let out a laugh and Katherine scoffed, “Don’t tempt us dear.”

Severus laughed as he brushed his hair behind his ear just as father Edmund spoke.

“Severus, you’re sure?”

He nodded his head, “Yes, I’m sure.”

Katherine turned his head and lifted his chin so he was looking into her eyes. Green seeming to drill into onyx black.

“Absolutely sure?”

Severus paused, he could feel a light pressure in the centre of his head again. This time he pulled a memory forward, thought back to the night before the Princes came to collect him.

There was a fire burning in the hearth, they were sitting on the warm carpet on the floor. Severus arched a brow at the boy in front of him as he glanced down at the muggle chess board between them.

“You’re sure about this Black?”

“Yes I’m bloody well sure, just move already.” He huffed indignantly folding his arms over his chest. Severus just shrugged as he moved his knight and-

“Checkmate.”

“Oh come on!”

“This has to be some sort of fluke. It’s because it’s a muggle chess board isn’t it?”

Severus rolled his eyes, “And exactly how does that make any difference?”

“I don’t know! I just-“

“You lost Black, just accept it and move on.”

“Yes, exactly. You lost again.” James suddenly called out as he slumped down onto the floor beside Severus, “That’s enough for one night, it’s late. Go get some sleep Padfoot.”

“How did you even-“ Sirius let out a frustrated huff as he dragged his hand through his hair. Then he reached out to the other pieces tossed aside and put them back on the board. “No, one more. This time I’ll get it, I’m sure.”

“Padfoot-“

“Best five out of eight then?”

“Shove off! I’m not losing again.”

“Severus-“

“That’s what you said last time and the time before that-“

“I said shut it.”

“How are you both ignoring me?!”

Severus looked over to James, “Whining is unattractive Potter.”

James glared, “I’m not whining.”

Sirius scoffed as he finished setting up the board, “Yes you are.”

“Why is this the one time that you two decide to get along?”

Severus looked back at Sirius who barely even spared him a glance as he spoke, “Prongs, you’re the one that wanted us to get along.”

“Well, yeah, but only when it’s for my benefit.” James huffed and Severus arched a brow before looking over to Sirius.

“Very well, Black; you’re a mangey mongrel and I hope you die a slow painful death.”

Sirius was glaring at the board, “Piss off you, greasy git.”

“Happy?”

James rolled his eyes hard, “I hate you both.”

Severus arched a brow at him, letting his chin rest on his hand as his hair fell over his face. “Really?”

James looked at him for a moment in silence before letting out a groan.

“Fine, I just hate Sirius.”

“Thanks mate.”

Severus scoffed looking back to the board just after Sirius moved his first pawn.

“If you’re playing again can I at least just get one thing?”

Severus’ head gave a tilt before he moved his own pawn, “What?”

Instead of answering James put a hand on the side of the raven's face to turn his head and pressed a short kiss on his lips. His cheeks flushed as he pulled back and Severus paused. He couldn't help but lick his lips before he spoke.

"Satisfied?"

"No." James said simply and Severus felt his face flush with heat only for movement out of the corner of his eye to catch his attention and he glared at Sirius.

"No you don't you mutt! How are you already trying to cheat?"

Sirius started to frown, "Prongs, you must be an awful kisser if you couldn't even distract him from that much."

Severus let out a silent breath as he fixed his side of the board and brushed his hair back as he willed his flush away, "He's atrocious, but that doesn't mean you can try to cheat."

"Really Sev?"

Katherine shut her eyes and let out one final sigh. "Alright, fine. The Potter boy saved your life, if he wants the chance to court you I suppose we could grant him that much."

"Katherine?" Edmund asked and the woman just shook her head.

"Resistance is futile dear." She said pressing a kiss on Severus' temple before she pulled back, "But if he does end up hurting you--"

"Twenty years in Azkaban?" Severus asked with a smile and Edmund scoffed,

"He'd be so lucky."

The next few days were spent with Katherine and Edmund periodically asking him more about school. Probing for information on any more life-threatening situations, he realised. He wasn't surprised, even less that most of the questions seemed to be about the marauders. Severus didn't want to go into any details, but he didn't lie either. They both seemed to soften a bit to the idea of Sirius after Severus told them about his disownment. Softened a bit to the idea of Remus when Severus described his calm nature. Katherine softened a bit at the idea of James after Severus started telling her a few more stories of his persistence.

Father Edmund was not so impressed and made it clear on several occasions.

"I simply don't think arrogant and impulsive is the right fit for Severus." The older man said as they sat at the dinner table one night. Katherine looked at him with an arched brow.

"As opposed to arrogant, impulsive and short-tempered?"

Edmund looked up at his wife, "I'm assuming that you're referring to yourself."

"You assume wrong."

Eileen smiled softly from her seat beside Severus, "I think Severus will do just fine."

Edmund shrugged, "I just think he'd benefit from the Krums coming to his confirmation party."

"Absolutely not! You know I can't stand Krum and that... barbaric spawn of his." Katherine said as she reached for her glass of wine, "I'd rather see Severus married to the Black boy."

Severus cringed hard, Eileen shook her head, “You’d have to deal with Walburga, Mother.”

Edmund’s expression soured and Katherine’s nose wrinkled, “Potentially... Fine, if you don’t want Severus married to the Potter boy then we’ll marry him to the Lupin boy.”

Severus’ face twisted, “Mother Katherine-“

“Must you be so difficult?”

“I’m being supportive. You are constantly complaining about the Potter boy.”

“Only because Severus could do better.”

“Well, of course he could do better, but if Severus wants to marry him then that’s what he’s going to do.”

“I don’t want to marry Potter!” Severus said clearly and his grandparents looked up at him. The raven huffed in frustration, his cheeks flushed with a dark blush, “Could we please not discuss my non-existent romantic relationship with James Potter. We’re barely in a relationship but you’re already planning my divorce.”

Katherine nodded, “Really Edmund, do try to contain yourself.”

Edmund gave his wife a withering glare, “As I was saying. The Krums will also be attending.”

“Over my dead body.”

“Severus.” Eileen started, “Would you like the *Potter boy* and his friends to come?”

The argument between Katherine and Edmund immediately stilled and Severus resisted the urge to look up at his grandparents.

“I’m not sure if Lupin would make it either way. It’s on an...awkward time of the month.”

“What about James?”

“I...” He looked into his mother’s eyes, her form still frail and weak but those onyx eyes that he’d inherited from her still as sharp as ever. He wouldn’t be able to lie even if he tried. “Yes.”

Eileen then looked up at her parents. “Then the Potter boy will be added to the list. Won’t he father?”

Edmund let out a very audible sigh, “Very well.”

Katherine nodded, “And the Krums will stay wherever the bloody hell they are.”

Edmund just shook his head.

The next few days before the party went by entirely too fast and somehow not fast enough. Severus had, admittedly, been quite nervous. For a multitude of reasons. Partly because of the reaction he might receive as the new heir of Prince. Partly because he wasn’t sure what on earth he’d do in a room full of purebloods silently and audibly scrutinizing him. But also, he was somehow nervous about seeing Potter again. As the days rolled on he was almost regretting having the Gryffindor’s name added to the guest list but then at the same time, he was also a bit... excited.

Severus held back a sigh, resisting the urge to reach up and touch his hair as mother Katherine

continued to lead him through the crowded ball room. Not long now and then he'll be left to his own devices. He can choose to go look for Potter or... choose not to.

Severus wasn't sure what he wanted to do.

"What an absolute eyesore."

Someone suddenly said and Severus tensed at the same time that his grandparents did. There were a few of their guests, that dropped the pretences and chose to voice exactly what they thought of Eileen and of the Prince's new heir. For the most part Katherine and Edmund handled it well enough and Severus managed with a polite nod and a sneer of disdain in return. So far there'd only been one incident that required a slight change in tactics. Tactics which entailed ordering one of the elves to transport their unruly guest to the nearest swamp.

That seemed to make most of their guests behave themselves. But there's always a chance for a repeat performance.

"Really Katherine, there's entirely too many pureblood elitists crammed into one room. However am I going to remove the stench self-righteous conceit from my dress?"

And then mother Katherine smiled just as she turned and Severus turned as well. Behind them stood a rather short blonde woman with light brown eyes and a slender figure next to a tall man with dark hair and bright green eyes. The woman wore a black gown with long lace sleeves and the man wore dark robes of black and emerald green. The woman had her left hand tucked under her right which held a flute of champagne and the man was had just finished off his glass and was already reaching for another on one of the floating trays that moved about the room.

"Adam and Eleanor Rosier, who on earth let you in?"

"The same person that let the Everly's in I suspect." Adam said with a bored drawl already halfway through his glass before nodding to his grandfather. "Edmund."

"Adam."

"So you have a new heir, it's about bloody time." Eleanor said looking over to Severus with an arched brow, "Heard about the divorce, shame that is. The muggle might've been poor but at least you got something decent out of it."

Edmund looked very close to rolling his eyes, "Ever the delicate flower, aren't you Eleanor."

"Careful, that's my wife you're talking about. She might have the delicacy of a troll but she's my delicate troll."

Eleanor rolled her eyes hard, "Shut up, you inconsolable twat."

Adam laughed Severus almost started to smile at their behaviour when Eleanor spoke again.

"Evan come say hello to the Prince boy."

Severus paused when he finally noticed the tall blonde that stood behind them looking entirely too bored as he held a flute of what must have been juice in his hand. The blonde stepped forward, wearing the same black and emerald robes that his father wore.

"Wotcher Snape."

Eleanor swatted him on the back of the head, Evan winched.

“Ow.”

“It’s Prince now, mind your manners and keep the boy occupied while we discuss something with his grandparents.”

Evan let out a huff as he stalked forward and grabbed Severus’ wrist. Before he could even blink he was being dragged over to the side.

Katherine almost reached out in alarm, “Severus-“

“Don’t worry, they’re in the same house at school. Same year as well. Evan told us after we got the invitation.”

“Oh.” Katherine said letting out a soft sigh and Eleanor let out a scoff. Adam noted how Edmund seemed relax a bit as well.

“A bit protective, are we?”

“We just, recently we’ve been learning things about Severus we never imagined we’d learn. It’s just a bit unsettling suddenly having him out of our sight.” Katherine admitted and Eleanor nodded.

“You won’t need to worry about Evan. He says they’re good friends. Well, he may have implied that they were more than that at one point but-“

Katherine blinked, “What do you mean?”

“Evan,” Severus hissed, “What the hell-“

“I’m dying Severus. There’s nothing to drink here, every time I touch a glass it turns into sparkling apple juice or whatever the fuck this shit is.” Evan said with a huff as he stopped and set the glass down on the nearest table. Severus let out a sigh.

“They’re charmed so that it changes to juice if you’re underage.”

“Brilliant.” Evan huffed yet again as he glared at the glass, “Don’t suppose you could show me where the good stuff is could you?”

“I could, my grandmother would kill us both.” Severus said shortly folding his arms over his chest, “You’re going to have to get your alcohol somewhere else.”

Evan sighed before looking the other over, “You clean up good. So it’s Prince now, is it?”

Severus shrugged, “Yes.”

The blonde started to smile, “Mulciber’s going to hate this. The greasy bat, heir to the house of Prince. Can’t wait to see his face.”

Severus looked around, “I’m surprised I haven’t seen any of the other’s around tonight. I thought for sure Avery would show with his parents.”

“They went to France for the holidays remember? As for everyone else, who knows. Who cares either? The real question that needs to be answered is where you people hide your booze.”

Severus scoffed as he looked back over towards his grandparents. He noticed that they were

sneaking peeks over at him as well.

“What did your parents want to talk about?”

Evan shrugged, “Could be anything. Probably about getting us married though.”

Severus’ eyes went wide, “What?”

Evan rolled his eyes, “Mother wanted to know how I knew you. I told her we go to school together. Told her we’re in the same house. Told her we fooled around a few times.”

“Evan!”

“Calm down, Severus. Salazar, you’re still such a prude.”

“Why would you tell her that?!” Severus hissed as he moved closer to the blonde and Evan rolled his eyes.

“She would’ve figured it out anyway. An absolute bloodhound that woman.”

“I can’t believe that you-“

“Oh relax will you.” Evan said tossing his arm around Severus’ neck to draw him close, “So we fooled around for a bit. It was never serious right? What’s the problem here?”

“The problem is that your mother might be using that as an excuse to get us married.” Severus said as he tugged to try and pull loose. Evan shrugged again.

“And?”

“And... since when are you eager for marriage?”

“I’m not. But it’s either you or this absolute ditz the Malfoys tried to push at me at their last party. Really Severus, you’re not going to leave me at the mercy of some bird with the IQ of a tree stump, are you?”

Severus shook his head.

“By the way, exactly what are Potter and Black doing here?”

Severus tensed, “You saw them?”

Evan arched a brow, “Would’ve thought you’d tell your grandparents to keep them off the guest list.”

“Yes well, I didn’t.” Severus said reaching out to pick up Evan’s glass and drink from it, the blonde paused.

“It’s true isn’t it?”

“What’s true?”

“Regulus said he saw you hanging around Potter and his lot more than usual. Said it looked like the git fancied you from where he was standing.”

Severus paused he looked up at the blonde and then let out a sigh, “What if he did?”

Evan's face twisted in disgust, "Really Severus? Potter?!"

"It's nothing serious--"

"Just fooling about like you did with me then?"

"No." Severus said clearly, and Rosier shook his head.

"Exactly when did this start?"

"Too long ago for it to matter and I'll thank you to keep this to yourself."

"Unbelievable. So you won't marry me, just so you can *not do anything serious* with Potter?!"

"You don't really even want to be married to me, Evan."

"I don't want to be married to an airhead, Severus!"

Eleanor took a sip from her glass, "Evan only told us that he and your heir were a bit familiar some time ago."

Katherine blinked, "Really?"

"Yes."

"Just spit it out already Ellie." Adam said and Eleanor gave him a dark look before bringing her gaze over to Katherine.

"Your boy, you don't have him under any contracts yet, right?"

Edmund frowned, "And exactly why would you be interested in knowing that?"

She shrugged, "Evan's almost of age and he can be a bit of a handful. Been looking for a suitable match for him over the past year. Figured the heir of Prince would be a good fit."

"He's a half-blood."

"Makes no difference to us. Being your heir makes him good enough." Adam supplied and Edmund let out a quiet breath.

"We're flattered, but we're going to have to refuse."

"Why?"

"Well, other than the fact that we'd rather not bind Severus in contract with someone without his consent." Katherine let out a quiet breath of her own as she looked Eleanor right in the eye, "You know our family's stance on the... current state of affairs in the political field surrounding the wizarding world."

Adam rolled his eyes, "Still in the grey then?"

"And we have no intention of leaving it." Edmund said clearly. Katherine nodded, "We may not agree with the light on certain issues but the dark dabbles with forces we are not comfortable involving ourselves in. The Dark Lord might be quite the visionary, but he's also very unstable. Evan may have very well been a good match for him. But my grandson is not marrying into the dark."

Eleanor sighed, "Still as stubborn as ever."

"Thank you." Katherine said and Adam scoffed glancing back at the two teens.

"They do seem to get along well, though, don't they?"

Katherine looked back to see Severus rolling his eyes and talking to the blonde who had an arm around his neck.

"If Severus wants to keep him as his friend but so be it. But are you telling me that you haven't encouraged Evan towards following your footsteps?"

Eleanor shrugged, "Evan does what he likes. Even if we told him what to do he'd still do what he wanted. A bit of a loon that boy, but I'll admit we've been whispering in his ear from time to time."

"Yes well, until a point when I can be sure that your whispers haven't taken root, we're going to have to say no to your request."

Eleanor sighed, "I suppose we'll have to go with the girl, dear."

"Oh I'm sure Evan will like her just the same." He said sarcastically before he looked back at the teens and called out. "Evan!"

They started making their way back and Eleanor let out a sigh, "It was good to see you Katherine. You've been hiding away, I was almost concerned for a while."

Once the teens were beside them Eleanor looked over to Severus, "It was a pleasure to meet you lord Prince."

"The pleasure was mine, madam Rosier."

"Don't call me madam, you make it sound like I'm old enough to be your grandmother."

Katherine rolled her eyes, "Shove off you plastic tart."

Eleanor laughed as she walked away and her husband and son followed.

"Oh and Edmund, Katherine, do be careful. The pureblood harpy is in attendance." Adam said as they walked away and Edmund seemed to shut his eyes with a long-suffering sigh. Katherine took a deep breath before just taking hold of her grandson's shoulders

"Come along Severus." Katherine said and Severus frowned.

"Who's the pureblood harpy?" He asked and Katherine paused before she spoke.

"Maybe it would be best if you went to go look for the Potter boy now. I think that should be enough for one night."

"But--"

"Don't argue Severus." Edmund said, "I saw him and his friend by the balcony overlooking the garden. We'll come look for you later."

Severus' lips pursed together, surprised that his grandfather didn't even put up a fight about him spending time with the Gryffindor, but he still nodded, "Alright."

“Good. Please make good decisions.” She said leaning in to place a kiss on his temple, “I’d rather not be a great grandmother so soon.”

Severus flushed, “Mother Katherine.”

Edmund scoffed, “Male pregnancy requires potions dear, you know that.”

Katherine pulled away to take her husband’s arm, “Yes, well that doesn’t mean the Potter boy won’t try.”

“Not if he values his life.”

“You’re entirely too dramatic.” She said even as she waved him off and Severus had to fight off the flush that had stained his cheeks.

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The moon was bright and full. Remus wrote to tell them that he also received an invitation but, under the circumstances wouldn’t be able to attend. The werewolf said it was nice though. To at least be invited.

They were outside on the balcony overlooking the large beautiful garden down below. Sirius was leaning with his arms folded over the banister while James kept sipping from his nearly empty glass. The Animagus rolled his eyes.

“You’re sulking.”

“I’m not sulking.”

“If you want to talk to Snape so bad then why don’t you just walk up and do it?”

“It’s Prince now and I don’t-“ James sighed, almost lifting a hand and undoing all the work he’d put into taming his hair before he quickly caught himself, “He has to talk to everyone else first. Official introductions and what-not.”

“So?”

“So... I don’t want the Princes to think I’m rude or something.”

Sirius just rolled his eyes again. He didn’t say anything because he was quite sure there was nothing he’d be able to say that would calm James down. It’d just make things worse. Especially after seeing Severus with Rosier earlier, James just seemed like he was in the worst mood.

“Then how about we wander around for a bit? I’m bored out of my mind and I’m tired of watching you not-sulk over Prince.”

James just shook his head, he opened his mouth to speak when-

“I almost didn’t recognise you.”

That familiar silky drawl came from the entrance of the ball room on the opposite side of the balcony. Severus was standing there with his arms folded behind his back, posture absolutely

straight and eyes steady wearing dark robes of black and emerald with accents of red around the collar and cuffs, silver embroidering and green stones around the Prince crest over the left side of his chest. A dragon, letting out a blaze of fire as a crown sat atop its head. His hair was tied back, at the base of his neck, a slight fringe over his forehead. There was a smirk of amusement on his lips as he stepped closer. Sirius wanted to roll his eyes all over again when he saw the flush on James' face.

"Evening Prince." Sirius drawled right back and Severus scoffed.

"That just sounds odd coming from you Black."

"Well I can't really call you Snape anymore, can I?"

"I suppose not." Severus then looked over at James and that look of amusement came back as he took another step closer.

"Cat got your tongue Potter?"

James let out a soft sigh, "It's just been a while since I last saw you Sev."

"It's been a few weeks. It's hardly been long at all." Severus said and his eyes narrowed as he almost glared at James, "What on earth did you do to your hair?"

James flushed a bit more but still smiled as he retorted, "I think I look pretty good. Handsome, well more than normal anyway."

Severus shook his head, his wand slipped from his sleeve into his hand and he cast a quick spell on James' head, removing all the hair product he'd used to keep it down. Then he put his wand away and reached up to mess it up a bit more.

"There, your hair might usually be a mess but I prefer this to... whatever you were trying to do before."

James started to frown before he reached over behind the raven to pull the tie loose holding his hair together. Severus tensed briefly but didn't stop the hazel eyed wizard as let his fingers comb through Severus' hair and those bone straight inky black locks fell around his face.

"I like this better too."

Severus rolled his eyes but that didn't make the amusement on his face even one bit. With James still blushing and Severus complaining about how his grandmother would throw a fit over his hair; Sirius was officially starting to feel like a third wheel. So he slipped away and decided to keep himself occupied while those two, did whatever it is that they're going to do.

He slipped away in a way that he thought was very discreet, but he still saw James glance up at him just as he re-entered the ballroom. He gave his friend a wink before slipping inside and headed for the nearest table to try and decide exactly what he was going to do.

He hated things like this, reminded him too much of his mother and the elitist parties that she would throw sometimes. He'd usually stick around for about five minutes before locking himself in his room for the rest of the night or just sneaking out. But under the current circumstances he couldn't really sneak out and he didn't want to start up any trouble, if only for James' sake.

He was about to go and look for something to eat when he heard an all too familiar voice.

“It’s a travesty, having a half-blood boy as your heir. You would’ve been better off just letting the bloodline die out.”

Walburga Black.

Sirius almost turned tail and headed in the opposite direction. It’s what was said next that stopped him.

“The blood that runs through Severus veins is that of the house of Prince. He has every right to be here and we have every reason to have him as our heir. The only travesty here is exactly where you get off showing up and delivering your judgement on us; when you weren’t even invited.” That sounded like Lord Prince, “The invitation issued was for young Regulus Black not for his ill-mannered mother.”

“If you think I would allow my son to come anywhere near your Half breed you’re mistaken.”

Sirius followed the commotion, watching as more and more of the guests turned to watch the scene and he pushed his way to the front until he finally saw his mother.

There were the Malfoys standing a few feet behind her, looking like they weren’t sure if they should back her up or deny any involvement with her. His father was sneering by his mother’s side as she glared hard at the Princes who only seemed to stare back coolly in return. Regulus was nowhere in sight. Sirius wasn’t sure if he was disappointed or relieved by that fact.

Despite not being invited and not approving of the occasion, Sirius noted that she and his father were both in fact wearing some of their best robes. But really even she wouldn’t show up to an event like this improperly dressed, even if it was an event celebrating a half-blood.

“Why are you here Walburga? If our heir is so offensive to your senses then there was absolutely no reason for you to arrive uninvited.” Edmund asked enunciating every word before looking over to her husband, “Really Orion, one would think that you would know how to properly leash your wife by now. But if you refuse to put her in her place I suppose we’ll have to do it ourselves.”

Orion’s glare got darker, “Excuse me?”

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“Where did Black disappear to?”

“Went to get a drink I think.”

James glanced back briefly at the ball room, there seemed to be some sort of commotion going on in there. But he could barely focus on that.

“Would you like to walk around for a bit?”

James paused to look at the raven, “What?”

Severus huffed as he brushed his hair behind his ear, “I’d rather not go back to the circus inside, but I’m sure you must be bored to death by now and thinking of all kinds of horrifying ways to try and keep yourself amused. I think I owe it to my grandparents to make sure you don’t get up to any

mischievous.”

James shrugged, “Where would we go?”

“The dragon stables first.” Severus said already walking backwards towards the stairs that led down from the balcony outside, “I remember you’d wanted to show me the ones at your house.”

“Yeah, we never got around to that.” James said a bit sadly and it was Severus’ turn to shrug.

“Well, how about I show you first? We can compare notes, see whose dragons are better and all that.”

James glanced back at the ball room but he didn’t really have to think about it too hard as he followed behind the Slytherin with a smile until he caught up and they made their way down into the garden.

“What breeds do you have?”

“A few different kinds, though I think you’ll find Hector very interesting.”

“Why’s that?”

“I think you have a lot in common.”

James rolled his eyes, “Sure we do.” He almost swallowed his own tongue when Severus grabbed his hand and walked across the garden between the round blooming rose bushes.

“This way is faster.” The raven said, the moonlight making his skin glow in just the most ethereal way and James had to fight back against the urge to pull back on that hand and steal a kiss. Instead he just smiled back when Severus smiled and walked a bit faster to keep pace.

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Sirius was still standing by the side, watching the scene with wide eyes. Lady Prince was very clearly very quickly losing her patience.

“Where do you get the bloody nerve to talk about my grandson when your family makes a habit of disowning its children at the slightest provocation?”

“Slightest provocation? Well don’t you just have the most convenient memory? Weren’t you the ones that disowned Eileen after she disgraced herself and married that inhuman cur?” Walburga snapped back, by then the entire ballroom was watching, “And now you dare lay judgement on me for simply enforcing discipline on my family?!”

“Discipline?” Edmund said with a scoff as he looked at his wife, “Is that what they’re calling it now dear?”

“Apparently so darling.”

“We made our mistakes with our daughter but don’t think for one meagre second that your idea of discipline is in anyway similar to ours. As for our grandson, he may be a half-blood; but better a half-blood for an heir than repeatedly mix your own blood like a penniless beggar mixing spoiled potions for scraps.”

The room filled with gasps, a few flinched back. Walburga sneered dark eyes glinting dangerously, “I don’t know what you’re trying to imply but-“

“He’s trying to *imply* that you have gall judging our grandson’s parentage when you married your own cousin just to keep your rotting blood *pure*.”

He heard voices cackling, contrasting sharply with the silence that had fallen over the room. Looking back Sirius noticed the Rosiers looking like they were having a bloody fantastic time.

“Gall,” Orion started as his glare got just as dark as his wife’s, “Is speaking of things that your own family practiced itself not long ago.”

“I am a Prince and my vision of a wife hails from the mountains of Bulgaria, you brainless self-righteous failure of a blood curse.”

Walburga’s mouth fell open shocked rage.

Sirius couldn’t stop the scoff that left his throat at the sight.

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The large room was filled with low rumbles from the dragons sleeping all around them.

James cringed as he was slobbered by a long dragon tongue. He glared at the serpent as it leaned in a bit more so Severus could scratch lower behind its jaw.

“I’m nothing like this thing.”

“Really? You both love attention, both preen over your own looks like a pair of peacocks-“

“I do not-“

“And you both turn into tyrants if anyone even attempts to ignore you.” Severus said with a smile as he briefly stopped scratching the beast who immediately let out a growl of displeasure, flames briefly lighting up the inside of its mouth before Severus started scratching again.

“See?”

James huffed as he leaned back against the steel wall of the large enclosure.

“So this is what you’ve been doing?”

“Sometimes.” Severus shrugged, “I spent most of the time learning about my duties. Mother Katherine had me brewing. Father Edmund had me help him organise his work. Sometimes I’d just spend some time with my mother.”

James paused, “You said she wasn’t well before. Is she better now or?”

“Better, definitely better.” Severus said quietly before shaking his head, “I was occupied... I got your letters.”

“You did? Why didn’t you write back?”

“Family customs before the confirmation. I wasn’t allowed to write to anyone. Or communicate with anyone outside of the manor.” He finally pulled away from Hector, who growled again but didn’t put up much of a fuss as the boys left the cage and Severus spelled the large door shut and locked it.

He took James’ hand again and started leading him out of the stables, “How about the library next?”

“The library?”

Severus rolled his eyes, “Don’t pout like an infant. I promise I’ll make it worthwhile.”

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“I think that’s quite far enough, Edmund.” Abraxas Malfoy suddenly said as he cut in. Lucius was standing a few feet behind his father looking nervous as the older blonde levelled the Princes in a glare. Or rather, attempted to.

“There’s no need for such behaviour or language. Madame Black was simply voicing her concerns on your choice of heir.”

“No one asked her to voice her concerns when she wasn’t even invited.” Katherine said clearly. Malfoy let out an indiscernible breath.

“She’s here as my guest. I thought it simply an error on your part that she didn’t receive an invitation.”

“There was no error, she wasn’t invited.” Edmund’s glare met Abraxas’ ice-cold eyes, “As for you, your invitation read only with an allowance for one guest, which would be your son Lucius. Abraxas, I thought you knew better than to ignore proper etiquette and drag about extras like some classless commoner.”

Abraxas looked like he’d swallowed something particularly vile as his face contorted until Katherine spoken.

“Edmund. Temper darling.” Only to fix Abraxas in her own glare, “We mustn’t be so harsh with Lord Malfoy’s act of charity. At the rate that dear Walburga is going, who knows if she’ll even have any children left for her to name as heirs. You know she just tossed away a very gifted child of her own.”

Walburga scoffed, “Gifted?”

Sirius felt something tug in his chest and hoped no one would look his way and realise he was there.

“A quidditch player, proficient in duelling more than proficient in his transfiguration skills from what our grandson tells us. Yes, I’m sure he’ll go quite far.” Katherine said casually before she finished, “Especially since he won’t have to deal with an insolent, irrational, arrogant, mindless beast like... well, there’s no point in beating around the bush, an insolent, arrogant, mindless beast like you.”

A new series of gasps. Edmund scolded lightly.

“Katherine, temper dear.”

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The room was huge with books lining the walls all the way up to the ceiling shelves going to the back from the front. In the middle was a desk with a comfortable leather chair behind it. And just in front of that was a couch set of warm brown leather around a coffee table.

Empty plates that previously held treacle tart sat on the table. James scoffed as he leaned back into the couch as Severus sipped from his cup of tea. Two elves brought them in earlier, although James couldn't help but noticed that they seemed to have a particularly odd smell about them.

The tart was still delicious though.

“You know, when you said you'd make it worth my while; this wasn't the first thing that came to mind.”

“Oh.” Severus said as he took another sip of his tea, “And what were you expecting exactly?”

“Honestly? I was hoping for a snog.”

Severus rolled his eyes, “Of course you did. I suppose you were hoping I'd show you my room?”

“Am I allowed to see your room?”

“Technically, no.” Severus said setting his cup on the table before he leaned back and turned to face James. “You didn't think I'd let you shag me in my grandparents' house with a party going on downstairs, did you?”

James flushed, “Maybe.”

Severus let out a laugh as he shook his head, “We're not doing that.”

“Why not?”

“I promised mother Katherine I'd make good decisions and that, would be the worst decision.”

“Because of me or because of the shagging bit?”

“All of it.” Severus looked over to him looking down at James' hand on the couch, “We've barely kissed, we were apart for weeks and now you're already trying to jump in my bed.”

“You know it wasn't as sudden for me.” James said quietly as he reached out to take Severus' hand all over again and the raven just watched him do it, “As insane as things were when all of this started and as insane as it still sounds, I really do love you. That much hasn't changed for me.”

“Love is a very strong word, James.”

James looked up at the sound of his name and smiled, there was a light flush on Severus' cheeks and he leaned in a bit more on the couch.

“I mean it. You know I do.”

Those onyx eyes stared back at him in silence for a moment and James leaned in even closer to close the distance between them when Severus suddenly got up. But still held on to his hand.

“What?”

“One last stop.”

“But why-“

“I thought you wanted to see my room?”

James couldn't get off the couch fast enough.

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“My, this is quite a commotion.”

Sirius blinked when the Potters appeared in the crowd behind the Princes, “Maybe we should all calm down a bit.”

Walburga glared at Fleamont, “No one asked for your intervention you filth loving-“

“Cousin, that's quite enough. One would think that you'd know when to stop.” Euphemia said, she and her husband were dressed in matching red and black robes. “And to leave where you're not wanted.”

Katherine nodded, “Quite so Madame Potter.”

“If you think we're just going to leave after you-“

“You can leave willingly or I can have the elves apparate you forcefully.” Edmund said interrupting Orion, “Or I can simply have Aurors called since you are trespassing on private grounds without any invitation. Now get out before I have you thrown out on your psychotic inbred arses!”

“Language dear.” Katherine scolded and Edmund seemed to take in a deep breath and let it out.

“How uncouth, my sincerest apologies.” He said patting his wife's hand which was on his arm the way it's been that whole time before he looked up and glared at Orion and Walburga, “You know what they say about being exposed to unsavoury elements for too long.”

“Allow me to fix that dear. Hettie! Linus!”

Twin elves suddenly popped into the room, each wearing grey miniature robes as they spoke simultaneously. “Yes mistress Prince.”

“Swamp.”

“Yes mistress Prince.”

Before either Walburga or Orion could say a word they were both swiftly apparated away and the room dropped into silence. Except for the Rosiers of course. If they were cackling before they were practically howling now.

“Thank you dear, I was developing the most awful migraine. Abraxas.” Edmund said and Abraxas looked up with widened eyes as he was suddenly addressed, “Such an unpleasant display. My sincerest apologies, I was hoping to introduce you to my dear grandson but that simply won’t be possible tonight not after such a terrible scene.”

“Oh yes, darling absolutely unsightly.” Katherine supplied, “Our sincerest apologies, Lord Malfoy. Perhaps we can have you and your son over for tea. Without any *guests* next time.”

Abraxas seemed to swallow hard before he gave a carefully constructed smile, “Of course.”

“Good.” Edmund turned seeming to only notice the silence, “Who on earth silenced the music?”

Katherine let her wand slip from her holster and waved it around in a brief motion, the music from before started playing again.

“Wonderful.” That seemed to be everyone else’s cue to go on as if nothing happened. Though the topic for most around them seemed to be the scene that just occurred.

“Lord and Lady Potter how lovely to see you.” Katherine said as she approached the couple and Euphemia seemed to giggle into her hand just as Fleamont let out a scoff.

“It’s lovely to see you as well.”

“Oh and-“ Katherine’s eyes fell on Sirius and the Animagus almost tensed as those piercing green eyes locked onto him. “Young master Black, come closer dear. I’m not sure how often I’ll be able to speak with Severus’ friends, I’d like to make sure I get to know all of them. Come come.”

Friends? Is that what they are now? Sort of maybe.

Sirius swallowed hard and went closer.

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Severus opened the door to his room and pulled the hazel eyed wizard in with him before shutting it all over again.

James let his eyes run over everything from the cream walls to the intricate mouldings on the ceiling. The desk by the large French window overlooking the garden, stacked with parchment and books with a golden ink pot and three different quills neatly beside it. And then finally to the large four poster bed, warm shades of brown and green for the pillows and sheets.

“I haven’t had much time to really personalize it. Mother Katherine says she’ll be able to take me shopping once all of this is over.”

“Not bad. I was expecting a bit more green though-“

James was cut off when Severus grabbed hold of the front of his robes to drag him down and lock their lips in a kiss. Surprised by the movement, James froze for a split second before he wrapped

his arms around Severus' waist and drew him closer. The raven let out a soft moan and James felt something tug hard in his chest at the sound. He moved to pick the Slytherin up right off the ground only to stop when Severus pulled away.

"Wait."

"What, what's wrong?"

Severus looked up at him, shaking his head even as the blush on his face grew a bit darker. He pulled back.

"No bad decisions, remember?"

"I think it's a great decision."

Severus rolled his eyes, "Sit down." He said as he walked over to his bed and sat down to pull open the top drawer on his bedside table. James followed and sat on the bed as well.

Severus pulled out a stack of envelopes all kept together with a dark black ribbon. James frowned when he noticed his handwriting on the top one.

"You never opened them?"

Severus scoffed, "The last time you wrote my anything, I ended up thinking that I was being stalked by some love crazed psychopath. So please, forgive me for my apprehension."

James rolled his eyes, "These ones aren't like those ones."

"They aren't?"

"You broke the spell remember? I swear there's nothing creepy or weird in there." James started, "I just wrote about what I've been doing. You left so soon, I..." he paused, "I didn't want you to forget about me."

Severus watched him as he spoke before shaking his head, "Ever the sentimental twit, aren't you?"

"Wha--"

"Here." Severus said handing the stack of letters to the hazel eyed wizard and James frowned.

"Why?"

"They're unnecessary. A bit redundant really."

"But--"

"You said you wrote them so I wouldn't forget about you." Severus took his shoes off and dropped them on the floor before he lifted his feet up onto the bed.

"Yeah, but--"

Severus leaned over on his hands and knees and pressed a kiss on James' lips. "I haven't stopped thinking about you since I left."

James blinked, "Really?"

The raven scoffed, "I hope you've prepared yourself. My grandmother thinks you intend to marry me."

"She does?"

"Yes, and I'm quite sure my grandfather plans on killing you if you try."

"What... he hates me? How can he already hate me?!"

"He thinks you're an arrogant brat."

"I haven't even spoken to him yet!"

"Honestly, I'm inclined to agree with him."

James gave him a withering glare Severus shook his head. "My... my mother, thinks I might be in love with you."

James' mouth snapped shut. Whatever retort he had planned seemed to die right on his tongue.

"I think she's wrong." Severus looked away and shook his head, "She told me... I told her about some of the things that happened between us in the past. I told her I wasn't sure about you."

James swallowed hard, "What did she say?"

"That I need to decide on whether or not I'll ever be able to forgive you and if I'll ever be able to trust you someday."

"... will you?"

Severus let out a soft breath before looking up at the hazel eyed wizard, "You tell me you love me, all the time and... I believe you. You've been trying very hard to make it up to me and I believe you mean that too."

"So?"

"I think I've already forgiven you. I think I might already trust you. But I'm not sure if I should."

James took a deep breath, "What do you want me to do, Severus?"

"What do you want to do James?"

"Me?" James turned over onto his side so he was closer to the raven as he moved up a bit on the bed, "Right now, I just want to be with you. What do you want Severus?"

Severus' head gave a tilt, a smile slowly spreading across his lips, "I think I might want you."

"You think?"

"I know I do."

James smiled, "Then you can have me and I'll have you."

Severus let out a heavy sigh, "Mother Katherine is going to be so dissappointed. Father Edmund is going to kill you."

James started to pout, "Seriously, I haven't even said a word to him. How does he already hate

me?”

“No no, he’s not going to kill you over that.”

“Then what are-“

Severus moved forward, pushing James onto his back and locking their lips in another kiss.

XX

Sirius felt so awkward.

The party had drawn to a close. Fleamont and Euphemia decided that it would be best if they got going. After a lengthy conversation with the Princes, lady Prince finally agreed to let Severus come over for the last days of the summer holiday. Though they insisted that they wanted to be the ones to see him off on the Hogwarts express before he went to school.

Since James had effectively disappeared with Severus earlier, lord Prince decided to go and... collect the Potter boy so they could leave. Sirius immediately got the distinct impression that Severus’ grandfather didn’t like James very much. Lady Katherine had scoffed before suddenly suggesting that Sirius go along with him, to which her husband had given her a very dark look and Sirius discreetly tried to make a hasty retreat.

“He’s Severus’ friend. If I can make an effort, then so can you.”

It was all made so much worse when Fleamont and Euphemia just nodded as lady Prince drew them back into conversation all over again.

Merlin it was awkward.

“My apologies for the display earlier.”

Lord Prince suddenly said and Sirius almost jumped right out of his own skin when the older man suddenly spoke. They were upstairs, headed down the long hallway. Lady Prince summoned one of the elves and they told her that from what they could tell, Severus and James were in his room.

Lord Prince had gone slightly pale at that one.

“What? I mean, pardon?” Sirius said quickly catching himself. He wasn’t one for pureblood etiquette and all that stuffy nonsense. But James is his friend and he needs to make a good impression on his best friends not-boyfriend’s guardians.

Edmund arched a brow but otherwise kept his gaze up ahead, “I meant what happened earlier, with your parents. Katherine is right, you’re one of Severus’ *friends*. I apologize, if we offended you. Particularly, about the nature of your parents union. It wasn’t appropriate.”

Sirius just shook his head, “No offense taken. You didn’t say anything that wasn’t true.”

“In our world it’s not something that’s particularly offensive. I only meant to-“

“Put them in their place?” Sirius scoffed, “Really it’s fine. My parents are a nightmare, I know that. It’s nice to see someone stand up to them for once. Usually people just nod and smile.”

Edmund kept his eyes ahead, "Forgive me if I come off as intrusive. But may I ask why you were disowned?"

Sirius looked up at that, "I-

"You left, I know that much. My question is why you left."

Then Sirius looked away, his jaw clenched. "You seem know my mother. That doesn't seem like reason enough?"

"I suppose it is."

"Besides, a bit ridiculous aren't they? Snape... Severus he's... even I can admit he's bloody smart and talented and he's a *half-blood*. I used to hate him for that."

He said that last bit quietly, this time Edmund really did look at him.

"Is that where the animosity between you came from?"

"What?"

"Severus informed us that he hasn't always gotten along with you or the Potter boy."

Sirius almost stopped right in his tracks, "He did?"

"Yes."

Sirius looked away again, his lips pursing as his hands clenched at his sides, "I always knew, about my parents. That they were cousins. When I was younger mum used to make it sound like such a great thing that they did everything they could to keep us pure. When I got older I noticed things... bad things about my parents and about myself, but I was just always grateful my blood was pure. Then we get on the train. I didn't think much of Severus at first, but... I could tell he was smart. And then he got sorted into Slytherin and he was great at almost every subject in school... and he was poor and he was a half-blood. I hated it. I'd look at him and feel like a freak."

Edmund was quiet the whole time, "And now?"

He looked up and found Edmund watching at him. Sirius swallowed hard, forced his hands to unclench. "We get along well enough. Sna... Severus is surprisingly forgiving. He helped me out when I screwed up once even though he didn't have to. I'm grateful. As for James, he's happier than when Severus' around. Took me a while to accept that but, they seem happy."

Edmund paused, "That's... good."

Sirius looked up at the older man, a frown pulling at his lips. "You don't really like James, do you?"

"I've never spoken to him."

"But you don't want him with Severus."

"Who Severus keeps in his company is not a choice I *could* make, and at this point I'd rather not impose on his life anymore than necessary. I've learned my lesson in that regard."

Edmund said that last part quietly the Animagus let out a sigh.

Now he's speaking up on behalf of his best friend in front of his not-boyfriend's guardians.

Prongs better be grateful.

"James really does love him though, more than anything and... despite everything they seem really good together. He wouldn't hurt Severus."

"And you?"

"No. Besides, James would kill me if I even thought about it."

"Then I suppose we have something in common."

Sirius' eyes snapped up and found the older man with a very dark look in his eyes.

"As long as he makes Severus happy then I have no reason to interfere."

Sirius just nodded his head.

They finally made it to their destination. Sirius let out a sigh of relief

To the room down the hall on the right.

Edmund paused to knock, "Severus? Are you in there?"

No response.

With a frown from both of them, the older man opened the door.

"Severus?"

He stepped inside Sirius peered in around him only to freeze when he looked over to the bed.

On the bed and among the very ruffled sheets were Severus and James. The raven was curled into James' side, with James' arm around his waist, his glasses lying crookedly across his face. There were what looked like two sets of dark robes and shoes on the floor, but thankfully, they seemed mostly dressed; each still wearing a white dress shirt and black pants from what he could see.

He sighed in relief at that much.

Sirius carefully looked up at Edmund bracing himself for a reaction only for the man to shut his eyes and let out a heavy sigh as he rubbed his temples.

"Resistance is futile."

"What?"

Edmund opened his eyes to look at Sirius in silence for a moment. He looked back to the two on the bed and then gestured towards the door. Sirius turned back and left the room. Edmund followed and shut the door behind them.

"I think, under the circumstances... perhaps Severus' friends could spend the rest of the summer with him. Here."

Sirius blinked when the man took out his wand and waved it at the door as he muttered a spell. It glowed a bright red briefly before returning to normal.

“What’s that for?”

Lord Prince ignored that question, “We should speak with your guardians about the change in arrangements. Have a letter sent to the Lupin boy to invite him as well.”

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The next morning, he had to stop to push his glasses up onto his nose and figure out where he was.

The next morning, James woke to a sight he never thought he’d see but one he was no less happy about.

The room was bathed in bright morning light streaming in from the window, the bed was a bit of a mess and Severus was fast asleep with his head on James’ shoulder. Breathing deep and steady in the deep embrace of sleep.

James flushed and a dopey grin spread over his face before he leaned in and kissed the other on the lips.

“Hmm.” Severus stirred briefly and so James kissed him again and again.

“What- James?”

James moved right over the Slytherin and pressed one more kiss on his temple. Severus was squinting through the light in the room and he turned his head away to yawn into his hand before looking up at the other. His face flushed and eyes still sleepy as he frowned at the hazel eyed wizard.

“What’re you-“

“Good morning.” He said giving Severus one more kiss, “I could wake up every morning, just like this.”

Severus scoffed and rolled his eyes, “I’m sure you could.” He shook his head, “Where are your parents?”

“Does it matter?”

“Of course it-“

James kissed him again this time with his hands already slipping up under Severus’ shirt. The raven let out a brief squeak but didn’t push the other away. Instead he wrapped his arms around James’ neck, letting out a soft moan as the Gryffindor settled in between his legs and turned his head to deepen the kiss. He could feel hands running up his chest. Broom callused hands along his skin sending shivers down his spine.

“James.” He breathed as the other broke the kiss to make his way down the side of his neck, moving closer to grind down against the Slytherin. Severus gasped as he followed the movement, his flush going darker at the heated arousal he could feel almost right up against his own.

“Yes Severus?”

“I want you-“

And then suddenly a loud wailing sound screeched out around them. The two wizards quickly pulled apart, with both covering their ears as they looked up in confusion.

“What the hell-“

Before James could finish his sentence, they were both suddenly doused with an extraordinary amount of ice-cold water.

Severus gasped. James yelped and they just stared at each other in absolute shock until the door opened and they both looked up.

“Severus what on earth-“

Katherine paused and stared wide eyed at the boys as she stood there in her night gown. Both were soaked and on the bed which was also soaked.

Severus blushed despite the cold of the water, “Mother Katherine-“

“Mother what is it-“

Eileen also appeared in the door wearing a white night gown and robe. She blinked as well.

“Oh.” The raven-haired woman frowned, “Why are you both wet?”

James started to flush as well even as Severus spoke, “I don’t know.”

Katherine frowned and then she let out a heavy sigh as she turned right around and stormed out of the room.

“EDMUND!”

They all watched her go. Eileen paused and then realisation seemed to dawn in her eyes, she shook her head before looking back and giving both a soft smile as she walked closer.

“Morning. I’m Severus’ mother. Eileen Prince.”

James quickly scrambled to get off the bed to meet the woman and took one of her frail hands into his own for a brief shake.

“Uhm, James Potter. It’s nice to meet you Miss Prince.”

“Nice to meet you as well.” She said as she let go of his hand and wiped the water from onto her gown. He paused. “Sorry I-“

“You were trying to shag weren’t you?”

James’ flush went even darker just as Severus got off the bed as well. “Mother!”

“Chastity spell.” Eileen said waving around the room, “No doubt father’s doing. You’re either very brave or very stupid to try that here.” James paled and Eileen let out a scoff, “Your friend is already downstairs. You should both dry off and come down for breakfast.”

She turned around and left the room shutting the door quietly behind her. James looked back at Severus who fell back against the bed with his hands over his face.

“Chastity spell.” James frowned, “How does he already hate me?!”

Severus just groaned.

Chapter End Notes

A/N: THE END

Yup, the end. I'm done.

I am very comfortable leaving this here and so I am.

Thanks to everyone for reading

Please review

There's no way, they could have made two

Chapter Summary

Starting from chapter one, but different

Chapter Notes

A/N: This is a bonus chapter scene thingy, I don't know what to call it. Alternate story? Whatever, that doesn't matter. Thanks to everyone that's read and reviewed the story and stuck around despite my irregular posts and frequent disappearances.

So this is an alternate thingy. It came to me in the middle of the night and my brain then refused to let me sleep for the rest of the week. It was awful.

O.K so this starts in chapter one of this fic, Sirius casts the spell on James but the effect the spell has is a little different from the rest of the story. It's a one-shot, a very long one shot, but I think I managed to avoid leaving it as a cliff hanger. Also this is way more cracky than the previous story. I wanted fluff, I wanted cuteness, I wanted James and Severus bickering back and forth.

Do not take any of this seriously, you don't even have to read it if you don't want to. My Everything has already ended, this is just me losing my mind at 2am in the morning

Usual apologies

See previous chapters

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

It was all Sirius' fault.

You see James Potter has been-for lack of a better word-silently pining after Severus Snape for the past three years. He isn't entirely sure when his infatuation with the raven haired Slytherin started exactly, he just knows that it's been getting worse with every year that passed. But he hid it well, so well that the entire school – including his best friends – was under the impression that he hated Severus Snape but was hopelessly in love with his best friend Lily Evans and was therefore silently pining after her.

A condition that Sirius decided needed to be remedied with immediate effect.

So, for the first time since he first arrived at Hogwarts Sirius willingly went to the library to do some research on ways to relieve his friend of his situation. Eventually somehow Sirius found himself in the restricted section of the library where he found a very helpful looking book on spells and charms. From there on he stumbled on a charm that seemed to be exactly what he needed to help his best friend out.

See Sirius had thought the spell was a charm that could be used to reveal emotional connections, like whether or not someone had feelings for someone else. In other words, whether or not Lily Evans really liked James and was just pretending that she found him to be the most insufferable creature on the face of this earth.

Unfortunately, Sirius was only partly right.

Not only was Sirius partially wrong but his execution of the spell was absolutely atrocious and the spell that was meant to hit Lily Evans ended up hitting his best mate instead. Which probably wouldn't be so bad since the entire school already knew of James' affections for the redheaded girl. But again, Sirius was only partly correct in his assumptions on exactly what the spell he'd found in a mysterious book in the restricted section of the library and decided to use without any real practice actually did.

Along with his assumptions on exactly who it was that James fancied.

At first nothing happened.

They were sitting in class at the time, double potions with Slytherin. James was sitting next to Moony a few seats ahead of him and Peter just a few seats behind where Evans sat in her usual spot beside Snape.

At first nothing happened.

Sirius was partly relieved since that meant that his poor aim hadn't harmed his best friend in some way and partly annoyed since he'd wanted to see exactly what kind of effect the spell would have. He would get to see what effect the spell had the next morning.

It was early, but Remus was already buzzing around their room getting his books and notes ready for their classes. Sirius had just stumbled out of bed, his hair a complete mess as he dragged or attempted to drag his hand through the tangles and let out a wide yawn, sleepy grey eyes wandering over the room.

"Where's Wormtail?" he asked, not even bothering with a greeting as the werewolf walked by the bed. Remus sighed.

"He went home, remember? His grandmother's hundredth birthday is coming up so he'll be gone for the week."

"Right." Sirius said tiredly with a frown, "How is that fair though? Wormtail gets the week off because it's his nan's birthday but we have to suffer through potions and Binns unending lectures."

Remus only rolled his eyes, "Speaking of Binns, we have History of Magic first. You should be getting ready for lessons."

Sirius groaned as he fell back on his bed and Remus went back over to his own to check his bag, "I'm not letting you and James use my notes like last time."

"Ten more minutes."

Remus shook his head, "It takes you a full hour just to primp and preen over your hair. If you don't get up now you won't make it to breakfast let alone Binn's class."

The Animagus grabbed a pillow and pressed it onto his face. "Five minutes then."

Remus scoffed before looking over to James' bed which was opposite to Sirius'. The curtains were still closed.

"James isn't even up yet. At least he doesn't seem to put in much effort with his hair."

Sirius gave a grunt from somewhere under his pillow and Remus walked over to pull open the curtain's hanging over the bed.

"James, get--"

And then he froze.

It was unsettlingly quiet for a few moments. Sirius started to frown into his pillow since Remus hadn't started fussing like the insufferable mother-hen he is. Tossing the pillow aside the Animagus sat up with another yawn. He frowned yet again when he saw the werewolf standing stock still beside James' bed, his hand still on the curtain.

"What? He's not sleeping naked again, is he?"

Remus didn't respond, Sirius' frown got deeper as he got up from his own bed and saw how his friend's eyes had widened to comical proportions.

"Moony? What's wrong?"

That's when he heard a soft sigh come from the bed. Sirius walked over to look over Remus' shoulder-

"Seriously, what's--"

And then he froze as well.

On the bed was James Potter as he should be, lying on his back wearing a shirt with a blanket pulled up to his waist, with his mouth slightly open in the deep embrace of sleep.

"What in blue blazes..." Sirius stuttered out, still frozen in shock, because on the bed, curled into James' side with his head on the Gryffindor's chest and an arm wrapped around his waist was-

"Snape."

Yes, Severus Snape. From what they could tell the raven was naked and sleeping in James' bed, with James Right. There.

"What... what--" Sirius' eyes went even wider and he shrieked at the top of his lungs. "WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON HERE?!"

Remus jumped at the outburst, but he wasn't the only one as James was jolted from sleep and sat up at the sudden cry.

"What, I-Ow." He said softly, cringing as he brought a hand to his head. The Slytherin who had been sleeping on his chest only stirred briefly as he slipped from James' embrace to the bed and let out a quiet sigh, scratching his head before settling back on the bed. James cringed again, eyes squinting as he looked up at the two beside the bed in confusion.

"Padfoot... Padfoot what the hell is wrong with you?"

"What's wrong with me?!"

James winched as he reached for his glasses, "Why are you screaming? It can't be that late yet."

"Why are you in bed with Snape?!"

"What?" James slipped his glasses on. He could see his friends faces much clearer now. Sirius looked shocked... no, appalled as he stared at his friend in horror while Remus had gone completely silent staring at the bed with his eyes the widest that James had ever seen them.

"What're you-"

And that's when he saw it and froze as well.

On his bed, sleeping right beside him. Was Severus Snape.

James paled.

"What the fuck-"

Its about that time that the commotion in the room seemed to wake their guest as Snape's eyes opened and he let out a yawn of his own, stretching his arms out above the bed before looking up at James... and smiling.

What fresh hell is this-

"Good morning James." Snape said, those onyx eyes filling with warm affection as he sat up, dragging a hand through his hair causing those ink black locks to fall around his face, over his lightly flushed cheeks. "Did you sleep well?"

Two things.

Firstly, James had never seen Snape so much as smirk at him in a way that wasn't sarcastic or cruel before so seeing the Slytherin smile at him was something that his brain just refused to process right at that moment.

Second, Snape has never ever called him by his first name and frankly James didn't think that there was a snowballs chance in hell that he ever would. So hearing his first name come out of the Slytherin's mouth was putting his brain in so much distress the chaser was pretty sure that it had lost all proper functioning. Hence his immediate instinct to squirm back and away from the other until he fell over the side and onto the floor beside Remus' feet with a thud.

"James! Are you alright?" Snape asked as he moved to the edge of the bed, looking at the Gryffindor in concern. Completely uncaring to the fact that the blanket had moved and was dangerously close to slipping off and revealing his-

"What is happening?" James whispered. Remus swallowed hard. Unfortunately, Sirius had moved on right passed shock and confusion and straight into rage.

His face twisted into a glare and he practically growled, "What the hell are you doing here Snivellus?!"

"That's not my name." Snape seemed to look up at Sirius with a rather disappointed look on his face as he shook his head, "You really shouldn't call me that. James hates it you know. It's only O.K when he does it cause he's teasing me and he doesn't actually mean it."

"What?" Remus asked in confusion, but again Sirius had moved far beyond that.

“I don’t care what you want to be called you greasy bat!” The Animagus said as he moved forward to grab the Slytherin’s arm and drag him from his best mate’s bed, “How the hell did you-OW!”

Sirius yelped and immediately pulled back like he’d been burned and when he looked at his hand, he saw the painful angry red mark on his hand and he realised he had been. Remus had looked over to Sirius’ hand and blinked when he noticed the burn. The Animagus clutched his right hand against his chest.

“What did you do?!”

“No one’s allowed to touch me but James.” the raven said matter-of-factly as he sat back on the bed and gave the Animagus another unimpressed look. Remus’ frown grew.

“What do you mean no one’s allowed to touch you but James? Why can’t anyone else touch you?”

“Because I’m his, right James?” the Slytherin said giving the Gryffindor on the floor a pointed look and James was still too shocked to do anything more than gape.

“What?”

“You didn’t answer my question.” Snape said again as he looked at James, “Are you feeling alright? You must be hungry, its so early but we can’t stay in bed forever. You have classes and we’ll need to do some extra tutoring if you’re going to pass potions-“

“Wait wait wait!” Remus said looking down at his friend, “James, did you bring Snape in here?”

That seemed to snap him out of it as he immediately got up to his feet, “What?! Of course not! Why the hell would I bring Snivellus in here?! It must have been Padfoot!”

“ME?! Why would I bring Snape in here?!”

“For a prank what else?!”

Remus turned to the Animagus with a heavy sigh, “Really Sirius? How did you even get him in here?”

Sirius’ eyes filled with indignation and he almost forgot that his hand still hurt as he waved his arms up and down, almost in a complete panic.

“I DIDN’T BRING HIM IN HERE!”

“Yes you did.”

The three turned to look at the Slytherin who was still comfortably perched on James’ bed. James flinched at the sight of the raven sitting wrapped in the blanket his mother had given him at the beginning of the year.

Sirius glared at Snape, “You fucking liar!” without thinking he reached out to grab Snape again only to flinch back all over again to clutch at his arm, “OW! OW! OW! God damnit all to fucking hell!”

“Stop touching him!” Remus said as he rushed to his friend’s side to check on the burn.

“How the hell is he even doing that?!”

“You don’t remember? It happened yesterday.” Snape said simply and the Animagus hissed as he

looked over to the bed, with Remus shaking his head as he muttered a quick healing spell.

“Nothing happened yesterday!”

Snape rolled his eyes and sat with his legs crossed under the blanket before he spoke, “Cursed is a man with hidden love. Blessed is he who reveals the truth. Release the shadows within. Let the deepest desire bask in the light. Give love its true form.”

All three marauders just stared at the Slytherin in complete confusion. James spoke first as Remus moved back to the bed and Sirius followed.

“What does that-“

“Maledictus homo occultis amor. Beatus qui revelat varitatem. Obumbratio in dimittere. Summa cupiditas apricari in lucem. Da amorem suum verum formam.” Snape recited again and Remus was the one that spoke this time.

“Is that a spell? A spell for what?”

“Ask him.” Snape said nodding to the Animagus and the two looked over to see that Sirius had gone completely pale.

“Sirius?” Remus asked in concern. The Animagus stuttered and gaped,

“I... how do you... that doesn’t even matter! That has nothing to do with you Breaking into our dorm, like a creep!” he protested and Snape arched a brow before letting out a scoff.

“It has everything to do with the spell.”

“Sirius, what’s he talking about?” Remus asked and Sirius seemed to swallow hard taking a full step back and James managed to drag his eyes away from the Slytherin on his bed and over to his friend, he frowned. A feeling of dread filling his chest.

“What did you do?”

It took about an hour for them to try and sort of figure out what was happening. There was a lot of screaming, a lot of arguing, some profuse apologizing on Sirius’ front. James had lunged out to try and strangle Sirius not once but twice and Remus was trying very very hard to try and keep the situation at least moderately under control.

“Alright.” Remus let out a heavy sigh as he dragged a hand through his hair, completely undoing the effort he’d made to comb it that morning. He looked over to Sirius who was sitting on his bed looking absolutely guilty as he glanced up at James every now and then. And then he looked over to James, who was glaring daggers at Sirius while a deep blush flooded his cheeks.

“Let’s just try to understand this.” One deep breath, “Sirius cast a spell on James by accident yesterday. He’d meant to hit Lily with a spell that would reveal whether or not she loves James.” Remus made sure to enunciate the *accident* just to make sure James wouldn’t try to assault the Animagus again. “The spell hit James instead, so it would reveal who it is that he’s in love with. But instead of just revealing who a person loves, what the spell does is take the form of the person they love. Right?”

“More or less.” Snape said still sitting on the bed with no clothes on, his head gave a tilt. “You *are* smart. James thinks you’d get on really well with me if he and I ever get together.”

Sirius seemed to growl somewhere behind him only to suddenly stop with a choked cough. Remus looked up to find James glaring daggers at the Animagus. He shook his head and looked back at their problem at hand.

“You don’t really seem like Snape though, I mean, you look like him but-“

“I’m a manifestation of James’ desires. I’m not supposed to behave like the real Severus. I’m supposed to be-“

“What James wishes he would be like.” Remus finished for him and Snape smiled.

“You really are smart.”

Remus looked over to James, “Really?”

“What?”

“This is what you want Snape to be like? A devoted admirer who won’t let anyone touch him but you?”

Sirius scoffed, James’ flush got even darker, “No!”

“James loves me.” Snape said and Remus couldn’t help the smirk that tugged at his lips as James somehow became even redder, “It started on the train. In first year when we met. He thought I was beautiful and decided right then that he was going to marry me. But then I said I wanted to be in Slytherin and he was so sad. It got worse after we were sorted because I kept ignoring him so he kept trying to get my attention. And then there was Evans too. James kind of hates Evans because she gets to spend so much time with me. But its all jealousy really. He’s jealous of those books I read too, that’s why he keeps destroying them...” Snape’s head gave a tilt, “Well that and the fact that he thinks the dark books are corrupting me and that’s one of the reasons why I won’t pay attention to him. He hates Malfoy though and Regulus and Avery and Rosier and... everyone in Slytherin really. James was so happy when he found out that Slytherin have their own dorm rooms, he doesn’t like the idea of me sleeping next to anyone else even if its just in the same room. James is hoping that I’m still a virgin because he wants to be the first one to-“

Snape was cut off when James practically jumped on the bed and put a hand over his mouth. The Slytherin stared at him in confusion, Remus was trying very very hard not to laugh while Sirius gaped.

“Oh you have got to be kidding me!”

Snape pulled back out of his grasp, “What’s wrong James?”

“Don’t say another word.”

“But-“

“Hold on.” Remus started, “You’re a manifestation of his desires, so not a real person. If you’re just a spell then how do we... well how do we-“

“Get rid of me?” Snape asked as he moved into James side and let his head rest on the Gryffindor chaser’s shoulder. James swallowed hard and just stared at him. “*Obumbratio in dimittere. Summa cupiditas apricari in lucem.*”

“I don’t get it.” Sirius said and Remus’ lips pursed together for a brief moment before his eyes lit

up in realisation.

“James has to tell Snape how he feels.”

“Snape already knows.”

“No, he has to tell the real Snape.”

James’ eyes went wide and he pulled away from the Slytherin.

“Absolutely not!”

“James-“

He got off from the bed and started pacing, “I don’t even like Snape. Whatever this is must be some weird side effect of the weird spell Sirius used! I’m not saying anything to bloody Snivellus.”

Snape frowned, “Why not? You’re always daydreaming about telling him. Well fantasizing would be more accurate.” The raven then looked at Remus, “Last time he thought about telling me in detention when no one else is around, but then he realised that I’d probably think he was lying so then James thought he’d just prove it by pinning me down on one of the desks and-“

“SHUT UP!” James snapped. Sirius seemed to grimace.

“That’s disgusting.”

James spun around to glare at his friend, “You shut up too! This is all your fault!”

“My fault?! I’m not the one pining after Snivellus of all people-“

“Don’t call me that.” Snape cut in sharply, “I told you James doesn’t like it. And I’m sorry James but I can’t *shut up*.”

Remus looked back at the raven, “What do you mean by that?”

“Let the deepest desire bask in the light.” Snape said simply, “Until the spell is broken, I can’t lie or keep quiet about what I am. You have about three days to break it.”

James stepped closer to the bed, “Three days? What happens in three days?”

Snape looked at James, “The spell matures.”

“And what happens then?” Remus asked and Snape shrugged.

“If you haven’t told Severus how you feel after the three days then I will.”

“Like hell you will-“

“You can’t stop me.” Snape said simply before shaking his head, “Oh remember you have to get him to kiss you too.”

“What?!”

“He has to kiss you, not the other way around. Remember that other dream you had about me kissing you behind the quidditch stands after curfew. Just like that, although, you probably shouldn’t try to suck him off so soon.”

“Ew.” Sirius said and Remus just shook his head, despite the light blush on his own face. James just gaped.

Snape leaned forward to brace his chin on the palm of his hand, “Break the spell, or I tell him everything.”

XX

The first thing they did when they left the dorms that morning, was have breakfast.

Snape or rather Severus as he insists on being called, insisted.

...

Alright he threatened to leave the room and go looking for the real Severus Snape if they didn't.

It was the most bizarre thing they'd ever witnessed. Severus Snape was buzzing and fussing over James that morning. Fixing his tie and complimenting him on his hair and smiling at James and giggling! Snape was fucking giggling!

It was so disturbing. Especially since he did all of that while wearing nothing but one of James' shirts because-

“I'm only allowed to wear James' clothes, or whatever he picks out for me.”

James had gone a bright red at that one, Sirius just looked at him with a frown while Remus shook his head with a pitying look.

By the time they got to breakfast most of the Great hall was filled with students already. Naturally they'd all looked over to the Slytherin table and of course all three just stopped and stared at Snape who was sitting between Regulus and Avery for the moment. His eyes were on a book as he absently took small bites from the toast on his plate while nodding every now and then as Regulus prattled on beside him, while his other hand toyed with his hair.

Just then Avery nudged the raven with his elbow before nodding up ahead and Snape looked up to find them staring at him. The Slytherin's lips twisted into a sneer and that same hateful glare as always fixed on them before he just looked back to his book.

After watching Snape fawn and fuss over James that morning, seeing Snape back to his old hateful self was both comforting and incredibly terrifying.

“I can't tell him.”

“You don't have a choice.”

“Moony I can't.”

“Yes you can.”

James let his head fall onto the table with a thud and Remus shook his head, “You know, the longer you wait, the harder it will be.”

“No.”

Remus sighed and looked over to Sirius for a little support but realised that he wouldn't be getting any from the Animagus. Sirius still hadn't entirely processed that whole James being in love with Snape thing so he thought it best to just leave him out of it for a while. Although even Remus had to admit-

“It's a little hard to believe that you actually feel that way about him.” James looked up at Remus but didn't lift his head from the table.

“What?”

“You've never even been nice to him James.”

James sighed as he looked up at the table on the other side of the hall, but still didn't lift his head.

“He's a snarky prat.”

“You've said that, multiple times. I don't really understand what it is that you love about him.”

James said nothing and Remus shrugged, “Fine, you don't have to tell me.” And then he leaned in to whisper against the chaser's ear, “I'll just ask *Severus* later. I'm sure he'll be more than happy to tell me all about your, what did he call them; fantasies about Snape?”

“Alright fine!” James huffed, “I-I like his eyes.”

“His eyes?”

“And I... I like his mouth and his hands and his voice is... I like his voice, a lot.”

“Okay.” The voice bit they all understood. Even Sirius with his insistent loathing of the Slytherin admitted that Severus bloody Snape had a *voice*.

James continued, “And he's really really smart and interesting. I like that he doesn't just do whatever I want him to do. And I like how he smirks when he's insulting me and I like how when he's working on a potion he sticks his tongue out a bit at the corner of his mouth and how he plays with his hair or his sleeves when he's reading. And he does this thing with his hands when's he's frustrated with school work-“

“Wow.” Sirius suddenly said and James looked up at his friend with a glare.

Remus sighed, “James if this is how you've felt the whole time then why didn't you just-“

“Tell him? Are you insane? Just look at that terrifying bat!” James said finally lifting his head to gesture to the Slytherin, “Would you just walk up to Snape and say something like that?” Remus looked up at Snape and a visible shiver went down his spine. Sirius looked up at the Slytherin and cringed hard.

“You've made your point.” James huffed again just as Remus continued, “Bullying him the way you have been doesn't really seem like a good idea either.”

“I wasn't *trying* to bully him, I just... I was just... he's just so.” James groaned as he let his head fall on the table again, “I just wanted him to pay attention that's all. The only people he talks to are Evans and those slimy bastards and we're not in the same house so I can't even use that as an excuse-“

“So you decided to bully him.”

“He’s such a prat.”

Remus sighed, “Alright, I think the best thing for now at least is to go to the library and find the book Sirius used. Then you’re going to need to stop pranking Snape and maybe just, stay away from him for a while.”

James looked up, “But-“

“At least until we’ve figured out what to do. That goes for you as well Sirius.”

James looked up at the Animagus and Sirius raised his hands in surrender. “I won’t do anything I swear. Having one Snape living in our dorm is bad enough.”

“Right the other one.” James said with a heavy sigh and Remus scoffed.

“I think he’ll be fine long as we keep him inside.” He looked at James and started to smile, “I’m sure he’d never do anything to upset *Jamie*.”

Sirius let out a bark of laughter and James glared at the werewolf, “Don’t ever call me that again.”

“Why because only *Severus* is allowed to call you that?” Sirius scoffed.

“Shut up.”

“Fine, if you don’t want to talk about it then we’ll just ask *Severus* to tell us all about your desires later; like how you want to marry him, and how many kids you want and why no one’s allowed to touch him and why he’s only allowed to wear your clothing, and exactly what kind of clothing you’d pick for him to wear-“

“Someone kill me.” James groaned wrapping his arms over his head and Remus couldn’t help but laugh.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

It was a long day.

Thankfully James didn’t share any classes with Slytherin that day so he was spared from really getting an opportunity to tell the object of his affections about his affections.

They went to the library after Binns class and realised that there really was no other way for them to get rid of Severus, not without James confessing and then getting a kiss from the real Snape first. James had groaned in misery at the revelation, Sirius sneered in disgust, at which point James tried to attack him again.

Yes, Remus had had a very long day indeed. Especially since, unlike James and Sirius, he had elected to take ancient runes as part of his course studies. A class that he shared with Snape. Remus had suggested that he try talking to Snape to which James immediately begged that he not reveal his feelings to the Slytherin. Remus agreed since he certainly wasn’t stupid enough to try that on his own, honestly Remus wasn’t even sure what he would say to Snape that the Slytherin wouldn’t either ignore or try to hex him over. But they were working on a deadline, so he figured he could at least try talking to Snape, just to test the waters a bit.

“Hullo Snape.” The werewolf tried standing at the desk about two rows away from the front giving his best smile only for it to falter the moment the Slytherin looked up to him. Anger and disgust, that’s what Remus saw in those pitch-black eyes that stared at him through a curtain of pitch-black

hair. Remus awkwardly cleared his throat.

“Uh, is this seat taken?”

Snape’s eyes narrowed down into a glare, “What do you want Lupin?”

“I-“ before he could answer, Professor Miller walked into the room. The Ancient runes professor’s presence immediately forcing the low chatter in the classroom to come to an immediate hush. Remus quickly sat down in the seat beside the Slytherin even as he felt the glare on him intensify. Snape didn’t get up to go to another seat, not surprising since professor Miller wasn’t known for her patience and any disturbance once she walked into the room was always severely punished. One of the reasons why James and Sirius didn’t take the class.

Once the lecture started Remus let out a sigh when Snape’s glare finally eased off of him. He tried to focus on the class, but found his gaze wandering over to Snape every now and then and he realised that James was right.

Snape would play with the edges of his sleeves when he read along with the passages that the professor was going through. He’d absently reach for a lock of hair and drag his fingers through it and twirl it around. And the thing he did with his hands when he was frustrated? He’d crack his fingers, bend and twirl them and then bite the nail on his thumb until the lines of frustration seemed to ease off his brow and his lips parted slightly as he made notes.

It was... sort of cute.

Remus spent most of the period watching Snape. Honestly, he got very little work done and he barely managed to catch the professor giving them an essay to complete at the end of the period. But at least now, he can see what James sees in the other.

It was just as everyone was packing up their things to leave and Miller quickly strode from the class that Remus took in another deep breath and turned to face the other.

“I... Snape.”

Predictably Snape ignored him.

“S-“ Hopefully he won’t get hexed for this, he spoke more firmly. “Severus.”

The raven tensed and Remus braced for the hex he was sure was about to come flying at his face. Instead, the Slytherin gave him the darkest glare that he’s ever had the misfortune of receiving and still through that dark dark curtain of hair. Now that he’s actually paying attention. Snape’s hair is actually really-

“Don’t call me that.”

“I... sorry, I just-“ Remus took another deep breath and cleared his throat, “About the assignment. I was wondering if you’d be willing to help me.”

“No.” Snape said very shortly as he got up to finish packing away his things. Remus got up just as the Slytherin was walking around his desk.

“Snape, please!” the werewolf said pulling together all the courage he could muster, “Miller... you know what she’s like and I really need the marks on this essay to help me make the grade. I just need a few hours of your time. I’ll-I’ll even pay you.”

Snape just stared back at him, “What is this, some sort of prank? Finally done hiding behind your mates and decided to give it a go yourself?”

Remus’ eyes widened, “No! No, I just... really need the help. And you don’t need to worry about Sirius or-or James either. I swear they won’t be there.”

“You swear.” Snape gave a scoff, “Ten galleons for two hours.”

Remus winced, that’s a bit steep. The raven arched a brow at him and Remus just nodded, “It’s a deal.”

“We’ll meet tomorrow outside the Slytherin common room after lessons.”

Remus blinked, “The Slytherin common rooms, but-“

“Forgive my trepidation Lupin, but I’d rather not be anywhere where your friends could try and accost me when you were the one that asked for help. There are ancient runes texts in the Slytherin private book store, we can use those for references.”

Remus swallowed hard.

“Al-Alright, I’ll see you then.”

Snape’s head gave a slight tilt, “You don’t have a problem with being in a pit of snakes?”

“I...” James owes him big time. “I really need the marks.”

“Very well.” Snape then grabbed his things and left the room. Remus let out a heavy sigh.

They had herbology next. It was frustrating since James had almost immediately started to pester Remus about whether or not he got to talk to Snape and what he said. Remus managed to stave him off until dinner time, at which point, James gaped.

“You’re studying with him?” Sirius looked equally shocked as he just gaped at the werewolf. Remus sighed as he started digging into his lamb chop.

“I had to bribe him to get him to agree to it, but yes.”

“Unbelievable.” James hissed as he glared right across the hall to the Slytherin table where Snape was engaged in conversation with Narcissa. “How much did he want?”

Remus shook his head, “Ten galleons for two hours.”

“Ten... what that’s it?!”

Remus looked offended, “What do you mean that’s it? Exactly where am I supposed to get that James, I’d like you to remember that I have an allowance. I don’t have ten galleons to spend like that.”

“I’ll give you the money later.” James huffed before he started stabbing at the food on his own plate with his fork and continued to glare across the hall. “Ten galleons, so that’s really all it took.”

Remus frowned at him before rolling his eyes, “I’m not sure if that’s what he would’ve asked from you if you had asked.”

“He’d probably demand the entire Potter vault and only give you ten minutes.” Sirius commented

as he reached for some chicken.

“Stubborn bat.” James growled and Remus rolled his eyes again.

“You really need to stop talking like that. I understand that he’s frustrating but that won’t help with your problem. Have you thought about what you’re going to do about your problem?”

James seemed to pause and looked at his friend, a light flush coloured his cheeks. “No.”

Remus nodded, “I’ll try to talk to him a bit more, see if there’s any way to reason with him.”

James looked at the werewolf, silent for a moment before he asked, “Exactly where are you meeting?”

Remus looked up and shook his head, “Don’t even think about it, James.”

“What-“

“It took a lot just getting Snape to agree to this. You can’t just show up unannounced.”

“But-“

“And besides, you wouldn’t be able to just interrupt anyway. Snape told me we’ll be studying in the Slytherin common rooms.”

That got Sirius’ attention, “And you agreed?!”

“Yes, I agreed and yes, I’m going.”

“But-“

“This is the best chance we have of fixing your mess.” Remus said very pointedly and Sirius’ mouth opened and shut like a fish out of water. Remus sighed again as he looked at James. “With this, hopefully I can at least get Snape to be willing to listen when you finally confess to him.”

The chaser’s eyes widened, “You’re not going to-“

“No I’m not going to tell him. but maybe I could soften the blow a bit.”

James nodded stiffly, casting one more look at the Slytherin table before looking down at his food. For once, without that insistent Gryffindor bravado, the raven looked terrified. It was sweet. Remus couldn’t help but smile a little.

“You were right by the way.”

“About what?”

“About Snape. About the things he does with his hair and hands and stuff.” Remus said with a shrug, “He’s... cute.”

James flushed and Sirius couldn’t hold in his next outburst, “Oh no! Not you too Moony!”

“No, I didn’t mean it like that. I’m just saying; I get it.” The werewolf then looked over to the Slytherin in question and cringed, “Hopefully we can make him understand it too.”

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With dinner finished, they had no choice but to head back up to their dorm room, despite the fact that neither James nor Sirius was particularly thrilled about dealing with their... guest. Remus reminded them that they couldn't avoid Severus forever. They had to go back to check on him at least, so they reluctantly went back to their room.

The moment the door opened James suddenly found himself with an armful of raven-haired Slytherin as Severus leaped up, wrapped his arms around his neck and kissed him right on the lips.

"Welcome back James." Severus said with a smile and James just stared back at the other in complete silence as those dark eyes that had been glaring at him with contempt every time he was near had suddenly filled with warmth and absolute devotion.

"Did you have a good day?"

"I ughm." He cleared his throat just as Sirius moved passed him with a scoff and Remus shut the door behind them with an amused smile, "It was fine."

"How was your day, Severus?" Remus asked as he dropped his bag on the bed the raven looked back at him.

"It was fine." And then he looked up at the Gryffindor in his arms, "But I missed you James. Did you manage to eat? Get to all your classes in time?"

"Wow." Sirius said as he watched them from his bed and Remus shook his head as he gestured to the Slytherin.

"Really, James?"

"I ate." James said shortly as he walked over to his bed, letting his bag hit the floor and Severus allowed himself to be dislodged but still followed, "Do you need to eat or--"

"No," He shook his head, "As long as you're fine then I am too."

"Right." James said, giving the Slytherin an uneasy look as he immediately hopped onto the bed with that smile still in place.

"Did you talk to Severus today? I didn't feel anything too different so I wondered."

Remus looked up at that, "You can feel that?"

"I'm a manifestation of his desires. Whenever he feels anything related to Severus I feel it." The raven explained, "Like earlier, I'm not sure what you did but James was jealous."

Both Sirius and Remus looked over to their friend and James flushed. Remus folded his arms over his chest.

"Really Prongs, I'm just studying with him."

James' mouth opened and closed, Severus was staring at him intently before he spoke.

"James wants you to promise you won't go into his room, he wants to be the first one to see it."

James groaned, hiding his face in his hands and Sirius just stared at him in shock.

"Wow."

“Shut up!”

XX

The next day went more or less the same as the one before. With the exception of Transfiguration, Charms and Potions, since those were all classes they shared with Slytherin.

James had decided to try and at least just sit next to the Snape as a way to break the ice and at least show some semblance of civility. Unfortunately in Transfiguration McGonagall had immediately stopped his attempt as she immediately started screaming when she saw him headed towards the Slytherin’s table. Prior experiences between James and Snape quickly reminding her to not let those two anywhere near each other.

In Charms, they were partnering up to learn a new spell. Rosier quickly took up his usual seat beside Snape, shoving the Gryffindor out of the way with a barely restrained, out of the way Potter before he sat down and proceeded to mooch off of Snape’s spell casting abilities for the rest of the period while Flitwick as always kept a wary eye on James. Prior experiences reminding *him* not to let his eye wander from Potter when learning new spells around Snape.

In Potions, James finally got a break. But only because Sirius seemed to finally take pity on his friend and intervened in a slightly more helpful way than normal.

Lily Evans usually sat beside Snape in Potions, hence Sirius’ intervention.

Professor Slughorn was known for his favouritism among students, and yet despite Snape’s obvious potions prowess, the professor seemed to prefer Evans to the raven in his very own house. Another problematic feature of his favouritism was his obvious preference for pure-blood students from families of high social standings.

Despite the fact that Sirius had been blasted from the Black family tree, he was still a Black, it didn’t take much to convince the professor to have Lily be his partner for the class. It was just a single period anyway, they weren’t brewing. It was a lecture and study time. What harm could it do?

Lily was ordered into the seat beside Sirius, much to the redhead’s very apparent annoyance and so James took the opportunity to slip into the seat beside Snape.

He’s never gotten a darker glare before in his life.

“Right, then.” Slughorn said with a smile, obviously pleased with himself, “The potion for this week will be Amortentia, the love potion. Now I’m sure you must all be very excited but I must warn you, brewing Amortentia is no easy feat. Can anyone tell me what the ingredients for Amortentia are?”

Remus and Severus raised their hands, for the moment Lily seemed to be arguing quietly with Sirius. Slughorn had no choice. It would be odd not to call on the person everyone knew was his best student at least occasionally.

“Mr Snape.”

“Rose Petals, peppermint, ashwinder eggs, moonstone, pearl dust, cherry blossoms and dragon scales.”

Snape answered and Slughorn nodded, “Very good, twenty points to Slytherin. Can anyone tell me what the effects of Amortentia are?”

Lily was still arguing with Sirius, but this time James raised his hand. He might not be a potions prodigy but he knew that much. There was a brief period in Fourth year when he'd contemplated the idea of slipping Snape love potions. Thankfully he managed to shove that idea way back into the recesses of his mind.

The Slytherin beside him cast a wary eye in his direction, Slughorn frowned even as he spoke.

"Mr Potter?"

"It gives one the feeling of love, artificial love so more infatuation than anything else. The drinker becomes romantically obsessed with the person that gives them the potion."

"Excellent. Twenty points to Gryffindor." Slughorn exclaimed and Snape seemed to huff as he just looked back down to his textbook while the professor continued the lecture. He went on and on about its creation, how to brew it and what the potion would look like in different stages when brewed right. Then the man set them to work. Twelve inches of parchment on the different variations of love potions and their differences in comparison to Amortentia, to be handed in at the end of the period.

James swallowed hard as he readied himself to try and actually have a civil conversation with the Slytherin only to blink when he realised that Snape had started without even glancing at him. The Gryffindor huffed in frustration at the head of black hair obstructing his view of his partner as he worked. It was at that time that he wished he could just go back to his usual hostile behaviour with the Slytherin, that seemed so much easier than actually making an effort with the stubborn wizard.

But he couldn't do that. Remus was right. He messed up and now he's in a position where he has no choice but to try and fix it.

"We're supposed to be doing this together you know." He said and he almost cringed at the way the Slytherin tensed.

"I'm aware."

"Then why--"

"I'd rather not fail because I was forced to have you as a partner."

James frowned, "I answered Slughorn's question right didn't I."

"Yes well, apparently miracles do happen." Snape drawled James resisted the urge to pout as the Slytherin lifted his head to read a passage from his book. He shook his head as he took his quill and scratched something out before making a note. James leaned forward a bit to look at the textbook and blinked at the dozens of little marks and corrections made on the pages.

Then Snape stopped and reached over the side to look for something in his bag. James subtly reached out for the textbook and flipped through the pages to see that there were marks on almost every page. In the front of the book however, the Slytherin didn't write his name. It read *Property of the Half-Blood Prince* in neat cursive letters-

"What do you think you're doing?!" Snape hissed as he snatched the book out of James' hands, "Keep your hands off of things that don't belong to you Potter."

James just stared back at him, "Who's the Half-Blood Prince?"

"None of your business." He spat and James rolled his eyes. It would be so much easier if he could

just go back to arguing with this infuriating snake.

“Well, since you refuse to let me help, then I don’t see what else I could occupy my time with.”

James could see the annoyance in those dark dark eyes before the Slytherin just huffed out a sigh, he opened the textbook back to the pages on love potions. “You will write down the descriptions of the different variations of potions I will handle the differences with Amortentia. Write only what’s written on the pages. I’ll spell the pages together once you’ve finished.”

James looked down at the book before he asked, “Do you mean the text or the corrections you made?”

“The corrections.” Snape ordered with the hardest roll of his eyes he’d ever seen in his life. James had to try hard not to smile, but he still did as he was told.

All he really did was copy the words from one page to another so James finished quickly enough, once he did he looked back at the Slytherin, whose head was still bowed down low over his own parchment. He had to fight back against that annoyingly familiar itch in his hands. The one that was begging him to reach out and brush the Slytherin’s hair away from his face and behind his ear.

Snape would kill him.

The Slytherin finished, spelled their parchments together and started looking the whole thing over.

“When did you do all this anyway?”

“Do what?” Snape asked shortly and James gestured towards the book.

“This, there are thousands of corrections in this thing.”

“I study regularly. I understand that that might be a foreign concept to you Potter but there are those of us who actually put in effort to get the things they want and don’t just rely on good looks and supposed charm.”

James wanted to get angry at that one when another thought came to mind, “So you think I’m good looking, Snape?”

Snape’s head snapped up and he glared hard, James continued unperturbed, “I must admit I’m flattered, but I’ll have to warn you, pretty words will only get you so far.”

“Piss off you arrogant toe-rag.” He hissed but James kept going.

“No no no, that’s not it. The right words here are; James you’re so handsome you don’t even need love potions, a simple smile will do.”

Snape looked at him incredulously, “Excuse me?”

Now there’s a new reaction.

“If you do that, maybe throw in a few more pretty words, I could be persuaded to let you go quite a distance.” James then leaned in, “Provided that I had some extra... incentive.”

Snape looked, disturbed.

James could feel the smirk tugging at his lips. This is usually the sort of teasing he reserved for Evans mostly because of the dual effects of annoyance it seemed to have on both her and Snape.

James never tried flirting with Snape. Firstly because the Slytherin terrified him but also because... it was Severus.

Simple flirting never seemed like it was good enough, it never felt like it was good enough for *Snape*.

Bullying him wasn't the better option Prongs, he could almost hear Remus say in the back of his head. Snape was so smart so witty so different. He was everything that James wanted so he never thought that the same tricks he used with other girls would have much of an effect on him...

But judging by the look on the raven's face, he might've been wrong about that.

Merlin he's an idiot.

Snape seemed to move back in his seat, "Potter--"

"No, that's not it either." James said reaching out to put his arm around the back of Snape's seat. The Slytherin jumped and then glared down hard at the appendage when James was suddenly right there in front of his face.

"It's James, love. Or darling, sweetheart whichever you prefer." Snape stared at him like he'd gone insane. And then his eyes turned to murder when the words seemed to fully register.

"Potter, if you don't remove your arm right this instant, I'll--"

Now for something extra daring.

"Punish me? Tie me down? Make me beg for mercy? I should've known you'd be kinky little kitten. Unfortunately, I can't let you have your way with me so soon." And then he reached out towards the temporarily shell shocked Slytherin to finally tuck his hair behind his ear. Snape flinched back, "You should probably take me out to dinner first, *Sev*."

That did it.

Before James could react a stinging charm hit him right in the face, he doubled over onto his side in pain. Briefly he heard Slughorn yelling and a commotion start up in the classroom. He was quickly ushered to the medical wing and had to endure the rest of the day under Pomfrey's care.

But when James thought back to the soft touch of Snape's hair when he brushed it aside, the light flush that powdered the Slytherin's cheeks and the wide confused look in those dark dark eyes just before the hex was fired.

He realised it was totally worth it.

XX

"I think I finally found a way to get through to him Moony."

"By harassing him?"

"I made him blush. Without fighting with him this time!"

"Well that's some progress I suppose." Remus sighed as he walked beside the chaser who was wearing a wide grin despite the still red and very painful blotches on left cheek and part of his chin. Madam Pomfrey said that they should be healed by morning.

"I can't believe you're flirting with Snivellus." Sirius huffed and James looked back at his friend with a glare.

"This whole thing is entirely your fault. I wasn't planning on flirting or even ever telling Severus anything but you forced my hand. So now, you're going to stop calling him Snivellus and you're going to stomach our whole relationship while we date and shag--"

"Ew."

"And get married and have twelve kids and you're going to be their godfather and you're going to like it, because this is all your fault."

Remus laughed, Sirius glared at the other, "Why do I feel like you're starting to enjoy this?"

"Well, maybe its because I am." James said before stopping and letting out a sigh as he turned to face his friend. "Sirius, you're my best friend. But I... Severus is everything I've ever wanted and while I'm still pissed at you for casting that spell on me, I'm also kind of happy. Everything's out in the open and, I don't have to lie about how I feel anymore."

Sirius' lips pursed into a line before he let out something close to a whine, "But Snape, Prongs, really? Why does it have to be Snape?"

"Because he's perfect. He's the one I want."

Sirius looked at his friend, the Animagus' expression twisting into misery before he let out another huff of frustration and started walking. "Fine, I'll stomach... whatever this is, but that doesn't mean I like it! And I'm only O.K with godfathering two of your unholy Gryffindor/Slytherin spawn, the rest can go to Remus."

James rolled his eyes while Remus just scoffed, "I'm fine with that. Though we should probably think about getting you with Snape first before you start naming your children."

James grinned, "We'll name one Fleamont after my dad and Euphemia for mum and I've always liked the name Harry--"

Sirius groaned, "Oh no, please stop!"

They'd just turned into the hallway leading to their dorm room when James frowned as he looked at the werewolf, "Aren't you supposed to be studying with Severus right now?"

"Well, after your attempts at flirting with him in class today, he told me he doesn't want my money and to stay away from him because; he doesn't know what kind of twisted game we're playing but he won't have any part in it."

Sirius shook his head and James shrugged, "Oh, that's too bad."

Remus looked up at the hazel eyed wizard, he noticed the pleased little smile playing on his lips and frowned, "You don't have to look so happy about it Prongs."

James flushed, "What- I'm not--"

"Wow." Sirius said giving James another pitying look and the hazel eyed wizard glared.

"Shut up."

They bickered back and forth like that for a while when they finally reached the door and opened

it. James braced for impact, expecting to find himself with an arm full of devoted raven haired Slytherin just like the last time only for nothing to happen.

Sirius frowned as he walked in, “Where’s the other one?”

“Bathroom maybe, I’ll check.” Remus said as he walked over to the connected bathroom and James frowned himself as he looked around the room and stopped by the bed. It was then that he noticed that his dresser was open and one of his school ties was hanging out the edge of the chest at the foot of his bed.

“James! He’s not here!”

Remus said coming back to the room in a slight panic, Sirius’ eyes went wide and James froze, “What do you mean he’s not here? Where would he go?!”

“Maybe he’s in one of the other rooms?” Sirius asked and Remus shook his head.

“Why though? He wouldn’t leave, James told him to stay put. He doesn’t even need to eat so why-”

“Moony.” Sirius said cutting the werewolf short when a thought came to mind, “When he said we have three days to break the spell, before he tells Snape himself. He meant three days starting when we found him in James’ bed, right? Not three days since I cast the spell...”

Both James and Remus froze and James’ eyes widened to comical proportions.

“We have to find him!”

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Avery and Rosier were engaged in conversation to his left. Regulus wouldn’t be out to dinner for a few more minutes at least so the seat on his right was vacant for the moment.

Dinner was set to be its usual boring affair but Severus was thankful for that much. Boring and uneventful was better than Lupin trying to ask for his help and whatever it is that Potter tried to pull on him earlier that day.

The Slytherin couldn’t help but flush as he thought about what happened earlier that day. He let his eyes drift up to the Gryffindor table and found himself relieved to discover that the Marauders had yet to show for dinner. Going early proved to be a good idea after all.

Earlier during Potions Potter, the stupid twat, not only sat down beside him in class but actually attempted to engage him in conversation. That was odd enough but-but then...

Was Potter, flirting with him?!

No, of course not. That can’t possibly be it. But Severus had only ever seen the Gryffindor use such tactics on Lily in an effort to gain her affections, having him behave that way with Severus was causing the Slytherin’s skin to crawl in all sorts of ways and leaving him to feel... confused. That must have been the plan after all, for some reason the toad has gotten bored with the physical and verbal abuse and has moved on to psychological abuse; probably hoping to drive the raven insane before graduation.

Severus shook his head and tried to focus on his meal. Whatever it was that Potter was trying to do didn’t matter, because Severus wasn’t going to allow himself to be pulled into one of his sick

games

It's unfortunate that he ended up getting detention because of Potter's stupidity, but Severus had no intention of apologising to that arrogant berk the way that Slughorn actually had the nerve to suggest, so he was more than happy to spend a few hours scrubbing cauldrons in the potions lab.

Slughorn never stayed to supervise his detentions anyway, so he could get away with reading or studying while he was there.

It might interfere with his studying and of course the extra time he'd like to spend on his Ancient Runes assignment, but he should be able to manage relatively well enough.

It was right in the middle of these thoughts, just as Severus reached out to start filling his plate, that the doors of the Great Hall suddenly slammed open. Severus didn't look up until a figure seemed to come rushing from the entrance right up to the Slytherin table, around the side and straight for him. He looked up when his shoulder was suddenly grabbed and he was forcibly turned around and then-

A pair of lips covered his own in a kiss.

Severus froze, but he wasn't the only one as a wave of shocked gasps and shouts echoed around him and he could feel the hundreds of stares from the students in the hall lock onto him and stay on him. For the moment though he was preoccupied with other things.

The figure that kissed him had his arms wrapped around the Slytherin's neck, pressed right up against him as he braced his knee on the bench beside Severus. A deep moan reached his ears as his mouth was worked open, soft but insistent lips parting his own to allow a tongue to slip inside-

That's when Severus snapped out of it.

He lifted his arms up to the figure's shoulders and grabbed hold to shove him away and keep him at arm's length.

"What the-"

Severus' words died on his tongue as he finally got the chance to get a good look at the idiot stupid enough to try and kiss him in the middle of the bloody Great Hall like that. The idiot had bone straight pitch-black hair down to his shoulders, a slightly larger nose with a bit of an odd shape to it, pale skin with the slightest hint of a rosy glow under his cheeks and obscenely dark onyx eyes. He looked like... He looked like him.

Severus was shocked silent.

That's when he noticed the whispers.

"Who is that?"

"Has he always been here?"

"He looks like Snape, right?"

"Snape has a brother?"

"It must be his brother."

"Would you kiss your brother like that?"

“I always knew he was a freak.”

That was bad enough, but the worst thing, the absolute worst was what his apparent doppelganger was wearing.

“Aren’t those Gryffindor colours?”

“No way!”

“Snape has a brother in Gryffindor? Since when?!”

Severus opened his mouth to speak trying to find the words when-

“James loves you.” The doppelganger said and Snape was yet again thrown for a complete loop as he stared at that oddly adoring look on the other’s face, “He loves you so much he can’t stand it.”

“What?”

“I swear he adores you. You see, I’m a manifestation of his desires. I’m you the way he wishes you would be but I’m not the real you so of course he doesn’t like me as much as he likes you but... James really does love you so much.”

Severus just stared back at the other, still unable to form the proper words. Because really, what the hell is he supposed to say to that?!

That’s when Avery who had been staring wide-eyed at the scene along with the rest of Slytherin house spoke, “James who?”

“James Potter. Of course.” The double answered simply earning a whole new series of gasps and confused mumblings only for him to look up at the door of the hall and smile. “Oh, here he comes.”

All eyes fell on the door and less than five seconds later the Marauders came bursting into the Great Hall. Wide eyed and out of breath.

“James! I told him! Isn’t that great!”

The Gryffindor stared back at the double in horror as he saw the one raven with his arms around Severus’ neck, leaning against him with a bright smile on his face before he looked back at Severus and his head gave a tilt.

“This was one of his fantasies you know. At first he thought about how much easier it would be if you had a brother in Gryffindor who was a bit nicer and he dated that one, but then he decided that if you did have a brother then he’d rather just have both of you at the same time.”

Those that were close enough to hear the double speak all stared at him in shock before looking back to the door where Potter stood frozen with a deep flush on his face, while Lupin and Black stood awkwardly behind him. The Gryffindor chaser seemed to swallow hard before determinedly walking over to the Slytherin table over to Snape’s side.

“That was a really long one too.” The double said as he dragged a hand through Severus’ hair, “Lots of hair pulling and bondage. James really wants to try that with you but he’s not sure how you’d react, but then he thought you could just try a collar at first and then-“

The raven was cut off when Potter suddenly pulled him away from Severus.

“James!”

And then threw him over his shoulder like a sack of potatoes before heading right back out the door. Lupin and Black quickly followed. Severus was still frozen as he stared after them only to quickly realise that now that the Marauders were out of the room, all eyes were on him waiting for a reaction.

Severus took a deep breath and then slowly got up from his seat. He could feel the blush burning under his skin but still made his way across the hall and out the door with as much dignity as he could muster. The second the door shut behind him, the hall erupted with noise.

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They had just made it outside of the Great Hall about one turn away.

“Shit shit shit!”

“Everyone saw everything. This is so bad!”

And then James put Severus down on the ground and glared, “What the hell is wrong with you?! Are you insane?!”

Severus’ head gave a tilt, “Time’s up James. It’s been three days.”

“I... that doesn’t fucking matter! And what the hell were you doing anyway?! Did you kiss him?!”

“Yes.”

“Why would you-“

“Because you want to.” The raven said simply and James felt like he was losing his mind.

“But you’re not me! I never said you could bloody well kiss him! Unbelievable, I can’t believe that you would do that in front of everyone! Severus would never-”

“I’m not the real Severus, James. But the real Severus knows the truth now, now you just have to get him to kiss you.”

“I... you-“ James couldn’t form the words, Sirius and Remus were at a complete loss for what to say as well when-

“*Silencio!*”

Sirius suddenly grabbed at his throat and his eyes went wide at the realisation that he couldn’t speak.

“*Langlock!*”

And then he hit the floor. All four blinked and looked up to find a very pissed off Slytherin headed towards them, wand in hand. James’ eyes went wide, Remus tensed and Sirius quickly reached for his wand but that wouldn’t help him now.

“*Incarcerus!*” Remus fell to the floor in a total body bind and James quickly took out his own wand and held it aimed at Snape.

“Potter.” Snape spat, eyes narrowed into a very dark glare as he flicked his wand towards the

double beside him, “You have ten seconds to explain before I blast you into oblivion.”

James swallowed hard, “I-“

“I already told you. He loves you.” The double said oh so unhelpfully and Snape just sneered at him.

“Potter. Explain. Now.”

“I... he’s... he’s not real. He’s a spell.”

“A spell for what?”

James took in a deep breath and then lowered his wand, Snape seemed to falter and his lips twitched into a frown just as the Gryffindor spoke.

“I’m in love with you.”

Silence.

“What?”

“I’m in love with you and he... this is a manifestation of my feelings, be-because of a spell that makes your desires come to life? Look the point is; he’s not real, I’m in love with you and if you kiss me, he’ll go away and never bother anyone again.”

Snape stared at him like he’d grown a second head.

“What?”

“C’mon James, you can do better.” Severus said and James glared at the double.

“How else am I supposed to explain this?”

“You-“

“Finite Incentatum!”

Snape said with his wand aimed at the double but nothing happened.

“Remus tried that already.” The double said with a sigh, “You have to kiss him to make me go away. Like this.” And suddenly Severus had reached out to grab the sides of James’ head and pulled him down for a kiss. James’ eyes went wide-

“STOP THAT!” Snape screamed, seemingly horrified at the image of himself in Gryffindor colours kissing James bloody Potter. He’d paled considerably and his stance wavered, not sure if going closer to the two was worth yanking them apart.

James was flushed a deep red when Severus broke it and seemed to stare at Snape in confusion.

“Sever-“

“You over there, right now.” Snape hissed flicking his wand over to the wall. Severus obeyed without protest and then Snape’s eyes were back on James again. “How did you do this and why?”

“It was an accident. And I already told you...” Then a thought came to mind, “Let’s go to the

library.”

“What for?”

“I’ll show you the book, where the spell is and you can see it for yourself.”

Snape paused, “What’s the book’s name?”

“What?”

“The name of the book that this supposed spell is in, what is it called? I’ll go to the library alone and look for it myself.”

“But-“

“If you think I’m willing to go anywhere with you after what happened last year then you’re sorely mistaken. The name of the book and the page.”

James’ lips pursed for a brief moment, “But, when are you going to go?”

“That’s none of your business.”

“You have to do it tonight.” Severus suddenly piped up, drawing their attention, “If you’re going to break the spell then you have to do it tonight.”

“Why?” Snape growled out, glaring darkly at his double.

“Time’s up, if you don’t break the spell, a penalty will be enforced.”

James took a step towards the other, “What penalty?”

“You’ll be forcefully bonded,” The double said with a shrug, “Forever.”

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It took every bit of restraint he had to stop himself from pulling his hair out in frustration as he reread the same two pages over and over again. He was trying to find something-anything to get himself out of the mess that Sirius Bloody Black decided to throw him into. But other than kissing Potter, Snape couldn’t find any other way to break the spell.

“You know, if you just kissed him then none of this would be necessary.”

Snape looked up at his double and couldn’t resist the urge to glare at the other. After Severus revealed the penalty for not breaking the spell, he hadn’t really cared about the details on how or why he found the book in the library. The threat of being bonded to Potter of all people whether he liked it or not was enough to have him willingly kiss a hippogriff if necessary, just so he could get out of it. After releasing Lupin and Black from the hexes Snape threw at them Potter led Severus to the library and showed him the book. Severus allowed himself to be led there for the time being while Lupin and Black followed much too close for his liking and his double insisted on holding Potter’s hand as they made their way there.

Now, he’s sitting at a table trying and failing to find some sort of loophole to break the spell, while his double sat at the table with him and the Marauders sat at a table a bit away.

He was trying very hard not to glare at them as well.

"I don't understand what the problem is. James adores you." Severus said with a sigh, his head tilting slightly, "Why don't you like him?"

Snape's glare got even darker, "He's an annoying bastard that's done nothing but try to humiliate me and ruin my life since the moment that we met."

"But he loves you."

"And that makes up for everything that he's done?"

Severus' lips pursed in a line for a moment as Snape looked back down at the book, trying to find some sort of inscription that he might've missed or some hidden meaning in the spell-

"Do you know which day James regrets most? The worst day of his life."

"I don't care."

"It was that day, by the lake." Snape tensed and the other seemed to move closer with his chair. "He hadn't been thinking when he did it. He just saw you with Evans and got so upset and Sirius was egging him on. When he started taking your clothes off, he saw the scars."

Snape froze as Severus kept going, "That's when he snapped out of it, that's why he dropped you so suddenly and he never said anything to anyone, not even Sirius or Remus about them. He wanted to ask where you got them but he figured you'd never tell him and if he suddenly started behaving differently he was afraid that you'd know he knew and you'd just hate him more. So he just kept going like nothing happened, but he started watching you more closely. He'd cover it up with pranks because that was easier to explain than letting anyone know that he was worried about you. James didn't want to have to explain why. And trying to talk to Evans was easier too, you two are so close he realised that she might know where you got them but she never let him talk about you. Every time he asked she'd threaten to curse him, made him promise that if he was really serious about dating her then he'd leave you alone but of course he couldn't do that."

Snape swallowed hard but said nothing as Severus continued, "He thinks about that day all the time; what he could have done differently. James never says anything though, he's terrified of you. He thinks that you'll never forgive him so there's no point in trying. Fighting and arguing with you just seems easier, you might hate him but at least you're there and at least you look at him."

Snape finally looked away from the other resisting the urge to look back at the Gryffindor in question, "Potter's a spoiled brat that's used to getting whatever he wants simply because he wants it."

"What does that-"

He looked up at his double, eyes narrowing into a glare, "He's not getting me."

The double blinked as he stared at the other when the large clock in the library suddenly started chiming. Snape looked up at the clock and realised that it was eleven o'clock. Four hours and he'd found nothing.

The Slytherin sighed as he shut the book and then shut his eyes. He took in one deep breath and prepared himself for his fate.

Just one kiss. One kiss and that's it. He'll be able to go back to his room, wash out his mouth maybe take a long shower for good measure, crawl under the covers and pretend like it was nothing more than one very long very disturbing dream.

Snape opened his eyes and stood from his chair before turning around.

“Let’s just get this over with Potter-“ And then he blinked. “Potter?”

The table behind him where the marauders had been sitting whispering among themselves was suddenly vacant.

“Where did they go?”

His double’s head gave a tilt and then he nodded, “Gryffindor Tower.”

“What?” Snape frowned, “Why are they there?”

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James sat in the chair, resisting the urge to tap his fingers as he watched the Slytherin at the table ahead of them read the two pages of the book in front of him for what had to be the hundredth time already.

“What’s taking him so long?”

Remus shook his head, “What do you think? He’s looking for a loophole.”

“There is no loophole.”

“Yes well, that won’t stop him from trying to find one.”

Sirius glared, “If he just kisses James then we could’ve left by now.”

“Snape would never do that, not unless he had absolutely no other choice.” Remus then looked up at the hazel eyed wizard beside him who’s lips were starting to pull into a pout and he rolled his eyes, “Don’t give me that look. You know its true.”

“I still can’t believe it though.” Sirius started, “Why didn’t the other one tell us about the penalty earlier?”

“In his defence we never asked if there was one.” Remus said with a sigh, “In any event, it won’t matter. Snape will realise that he has no other choice and he’ll do it eventually. One quick kiss is much better than being forcefully bound to someone for the rest of your life. We just have to wait until he accepts it.”

Sirius let his elbow rest on the table and let his head rest on the palm of his hand, “This is taking forever.”

“You could always just go back to the common room, Padfoot.” Remus said and Sirius glared.

“No way, not after that prat hexed me without warning.”

“You’re going to have to let that one go. Snape only did it because he was confused about what was going on. I mean, what would you do if a perfect copy of yourself kissed you and then went off with your mortal enemy?” Remus asked, “Under the circumstances, I think we can ignore this one incident.”

“That doesn’t mean he can hex me!”

“Even if we break the spell, James still has feelings for Snape. Do you really want to go picking a fight with the person he likes?”

James wasn't looking at either of them, his gaze was still focused on the two ravens at the next table. Sirius' lips pursed for a few moments before letting out a huff.

“Fine. But I won't forget this, and the moment Prongs gets over Snape is the moment I get my revenge.”

Remus looked at James and scoffed, “I think you'll be waiting a while.”

Sirius shook his head, “At least they won't be bound together once Snape finally gives up. We'll be able to get rid of the other one too.”

The werewolf nodded and then his head gave a tilt, “You know, its almost ironic.”

“What is?”

“If Severus hadn't told us about the penalty and we didn't know about it, the spell would've matured.”

“And?”

“And Snape would be bound to James whether he liked it or not.” Remus explained with a slight smile, “He'd have Severus Snape as his bound partner, forever. Under wizard law Snape would have to marry James, live with him, spend the rest of their lives together and Snape wouldn't be able to do anything about it.”

“So Prongs would get exactly what he's always wanted, for some reason.” Sirius scoffed, “It's a good thing the other one told us then. That would've been a mess.”

“If Snape didn't try to kill him first, right James? James...” Remus looked up at the wizard beside him only to pause at the wide-eyed look in James' eyes as he stared at Snape before looking down at the werewolf. Slowly, very slowly a wide grin started to spread over his lips.

“James?”

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The common room was mostly vacant, not surprising since it was nearly midnight on a school night. Mostly vacant with the exception of the marauders of course.

James was pacing in the common room. Remus and Sirius were staring nervously at the portrait hole.

“This, is an awful idea.” Sirius was the one to speak surprisingly enough, Remus nodded.

“He's going to kill you.”

“He'll have to get to me first, besides.” James said pausing for a brief moment, “By the time he gets to me, it'll be too late anyway.”

“Alright, forcing Snape to marry you is where I draw the line.” Remus said as he got up, “I want no part in this. Sirius?”

Sirius sat up, he looked at Remus and then back at James, “I-“

“This is your fault.” James said darkly and Sirius huffed as he sank back in his seat and folded his arms over his chest.

Remus shook his head and left the room, headed for the boy’s dorms.

“This is a bad idea James.”

James didn’t respond and Remus just continued on his way to their room. Sirius watched him go before bringing his gaze back to the hazel eyed wizard.

“This really is a terrible idea Prongs.”

“It’ll be fine. It’s-It’s for his own good.” James said dragging a hand through his hair and Sirius frowned.

“What do you mean its for his own good?”

James just shook his head, “Nothing, just... if Severus manages to get in here, you have to help me keep him away until midnight. Understand?”

“Fine, yes.”

“Good.”

Just then they heard the portrait open and they both tensed, Sirius took his wand out and James stepped back when-

“It’s just unbelievable.”

That’s Lily’s voice. The marauders each let out a sigh-

“So this, you-you’re some sort of spell?”

“Yes. I’m a manifestation of-“

“Lily I promise I’ll explain everything later, I need to talk to Potter.”

That was Severus... both of them.

James and Sirius both tensed all over again.

Seconds later Lily came walking into the room, still looking back at Snape’s double in awe just before she was followed by said double and Snape.

The Slytherin looked up into the common room, his nose wrinkling in distaste for a moment before he spoke.

“Lily, I need to talk to him alone.”

The redhead frowned, “Are you sure Sev? I don’t want them trying anything.”

“I’ll be fine. You can go.”

The girl seemed to purse her lips for a brief moment, seeming to notice the tension in the room but still relented as she turned and went up the steps to the girl’s dorms.

“We’ll talk later then.”

As soon as she was gone, Snape turned his gaze back to James. He took in a deep breath and let it out before determinedly walking over to the other.

“Why did you leave?”

“I-“

“It doesn’t matter, lets just end this.” Snape was less than three feet away when Sirius suddenly got up from his seat and stood in front of him, wand aimed at Snape. The Slytherin stopped and his eyes narrowed slightly.

“Black, out of my way.”

“I-I can’t do that.”

“I’m not going to attack him if that’s what you’re thinking.”

“I know.”

“Then what are you doing?”

Sirius rolled his eyes and let out a sigh of frustration, “I don’t know!”

Snape then frowned before looking up at James, “Potter, what’s the meaning of this?”

James swallowed hard when-

“Oh,” Severus who was standing back and watching the scene curiously started, “He’s trying to stop you from breaking the spell.”

“What?” he looked back at James, “Why would you do that? If it somehow isn’t clear to you yet Potter; If the spell doesn’t break by midnight, you’ll be forcefully bound to me.”

“Exactly.” The double chimed and Snape’s frown deepened before it just as suddenly fell into a gape. He looked back at the hazel eyed wizard with wide eyes.

“No, you can’t... why would you-“

“Because he loves you. And now he’ll have you forever.” Severus said with a smile and Snape paled.

“You-you can’t do that!”

James cleared his throat and straightened his posture before he spoke, “Apparently, I can.”

“You’re insane.”

“I’m in love, but what’s the difference right?” James said with a slight smile but the Slytherin didn’t seem amused by his joke as those dark dark eyes started to glare. He cleared his throat and squared his shoulders, “I’m not letting you break it.”

“I’m going to kill you.”

“Now now, Severus, that’s not a nice thing to say to your betrothed now is it?”

How it was possible for his glare to get any darker is beyond them. Snape suddenly had his wand

in his hand and aimed it at Sirius.

“Out of the way Black.”

“I can’t.”

“I thought you of all people would want me to stop this madness from continuing.”

“I do.”

“Then what-“

“I’m-I’m helping my best mate get the person of his dreams.” Sirius seemed to cringe at his own words as he spoke them, “I don’t get it alright, but you make him happy so... I’m not letting you near him. Until after midnight.”

“You miserable-“

“Sev,” Snape twitched but James continued, a smirk pulling at his lips, “I understand the need to have me claim your first kiss but that doesn’t mean you can use any foul language.”

Snape scoffed even as his eyes filled with rage, “You’d hardly be my first kiss Potter.”

James blinked, “What do you mean? Who was your first?”

Snape looked like he was going to start cursing only for his lips to suddenly curl into a smirk as he looked Sirius right in the eye.

“Regulus Arcturus Black.”

Sirius gaped, “No, he-he wouldn’t.”

“Oh he would,” Snape’s smirk grew, “He did much more than that as well.”

Sirius glared, “You’re lying.”

“Tell me Black; do you know about the birthmark on Regulus’ left thigh, right next to his-“

Without thinking Sirius fired a hex at Snape, he realised too late that the Slytherin seemed prepared as he quickly threw up a shield before firing another langlock followed by yet another silencio at the Animagus before he even knew what was happening.

James blinked and had to duck out of the way when a stupefy came hurdling right at him, only to gasp when Snape ran right into him. He lost his balance and ended up falling back and they tumbled onto the floor right behind the couch in front of the fire. James had to work quickly to get his wits about him and he managed to wrangle the wand from Snape’s hand and pin him to the floor.

“Damn it Potter! Let me go!”

“Not until after midnight.” James said glancing up at the clock in the common room, “There’s fifteen minutes left so just keep still.”

Snape just kept struggling, “I refuse to be bonded to a self-centred bastard like you for the rest of my life.”

“Well you don’t have a choice.”

“I’ll never forgive you for this! I’ll never stop hating you!”

“FINE! Hate me forever! You can fight me every day for the rest of our lives if you want, but at least this way I know you’re safe!”

And then Snape stopped, “What?”

James’ eyes widened a bit and a light blush started to flush his cheeks, he glanced up at the clock again, “Nothing.”

“No, its not nothing. How is binding me to you going to keep me safe?!”

“It doesn’t matter.”

“It doesn-...” Snape started struggling again before practically screaming, “Damn it, Potter! If you’re going to trap me with you for the rest of my life then I think I deserve to know why!”

“Because of Malfoy!”

Snape just stared, “Malfoy... what does he have to do with-“

“You know exactly what I’m talking about.” James said looking the Slytherin in the eyes, “Those gifts he’s been giving you; the robes and all those books. Everyone knows that Malfoy’s family is dark, they’re supremacists always crowning on about blood purity but for some reason he’s paying all this attention to a half-blood? Why would he go through all that trouble?”

Snape’s eyes narrowed ever so slightly, “That’s none of your business.”

James matched his gaze, “You know before Sirius left his parent’s house-“

“You mean when he was disowned?”

James ignored him, for once not letting his anger get the better of him since he knew Snape was just trying to throw him off, “He overheard a conversation between Bellatrix and Narcissa. Bellatrix has the mark, doesn’t she?”

Snape didn’t even flinch so James pushed on, “Instead of marrying Lestrangle straight after graduating, she had to wait first, even though they had a contract; why do you think that is? Do you know what I think?” the Slytherin still didn’t answer, “Because most pureblood families have bonding spells cast during ceremonies so being bonded to Lestrangle would complicate any other binding spells that are done to her, it would’ve made it difficult for her to get the mark if she married first. That’s why she had to wait.”

“Exactly what are you getting at?” Snape finally asked, that dark glare still in place and James took in a deep breath not breaking eye contact once.

“I know what all those gifts from Malfoy really mean. If you’re bound to me, you can’t take the mark; Firstly because of the bond but secondly because you’re a half-blood and under wizard law; you won’t be allowed to swear your magic to any master without my permission first. I’m not letting your precious Dark Lord go anywhere near you.”

Snape looked close to gaping as James looked back up at the clock again, “Ten minutes.”

It was quiet in the room for ten whole seconds, with the only sound being Sirius moving about,

trying and failing to use his wand to undo the curses on himself when Snape suddenly spoke.

“So you’re going to own me instead, that would make it better?”

“I know you’re not going to believe me, but I’m not trying to trap you.”

“Then what are you trying to do?”

James looked back down at the other, “Where did you get those scars? The ones on your back and over your chest?”

Snape tensed beneath him and James’ jaw clenched, “You don’t have to tell me, if you don’t want to. But I promise, I won’t let anyone ever do that to you again.”

Snape looked away and then let out a humourless scoff, “So what, you’re going to be my grand saviour? Protect me from all the bad horrible things in the world?”

“If I have to, then yes.”

“Your naivety is mind numbingly staggering.”

“You can insult me all you like, but I won’t change my mind-“

“My father gave me those scars Potter.” Snape said with a mocking smile, “How do you plan on protecting me from him?”

It was James’ turn to tense.

“Your father... but-“ His jaw clenched and then he swallowed hard, “Once we’re bonded, you’ll come home with me-“

“And you expect me to just leave my mother there with him?”

“She can come too-“

“Oh for Merlin’s sake-“

“I’ll do whatever it takes and you can curse me and insult me into oblivion but I will protect you.”

Snape’s lips pursed together, “Even from yourself. From your friends? Have you forgotten all of the things that you’ve done to me?”

James took a deep breath and looked back up at the clock, “I’ll make it up to you. In six minutes, I’ll officially have the rest of our lives to do it.”

“Potter.”

He kept his eyes on the clock, watching as the seconds ticked by-

“James.”

When Snape said his name, he had to look back.

“If you really love me, you won’t do this.”

For the first time in years, James saw tears gleaming in those dark dark eyes and he froze for a brief moment. His face was starting to flush, twisting into misery.

"I don't want to hate you for the rest of my life."

"You-you don't-"

"Of course not you dunderheaded idiot!" Snape said just as the tears started to fall down his cheeks, "Why would anyone want to hate someone for the rest of their lives?!"

"But you-"

"You've never given me any other choice! The one time I thought that I didn't have a reason to actually truly fear you, your mate sent me to a werewolf to die!"

"Sirius hadn't-"

"Merlin it doesn't matter what he'd meant to do! Right now, you're trying to force me into bonding with you! Exactly how do you expect me to move on with my life after all that?!"

James looked back at the clock, his hands clenching around Snape's wrists. Four minutes. "There's no other way to stop you from taking the mark."

"Then I won't take the bleeding mark!"

James looked back down at him, "And you won't go near Malfoy."

Snape huffed with a sniff, "Fine."

"And Avery and Mulciber."

"Fine."

"And you're not allowed to shag Regulus."

"What-" Snape blinked away the tears and saw the stupid Gryffindor wearing a grin. He glared, "You idiot! This isn't the time to make one of your brainless jokes-"

"I'm sorry. I'm sorry. All I really want is for you to promise, you'll give me the chance to make it up to you."

"Make up what?"

"Everything. Every time I've hurt you or embarrassed you. Every time I've ever made you cry." Snape blinked when James let go of one of his wrists and wiped away the tears away from his first, first on the left cheek and then on the right. "Give me the chance to make it right."

Despite himself, Snape scoffed, "There isn't enough time in the world for that."

"Then I guess, we'll just have to settle for the rest of our lives." James let go of Snape's other wrist and leaned in close, leaving less than an inch between them. "One minute, if you're going to break the spell you need to do it now."

Snape looked into those hazel eyes for a second and then leaned up to kiss him. Briefly they heard some sort of humming behind them, lights flashing brightly before all went silent. James had reached out a hand to cup the side of the raven's face and returned the kiss, soft and searching before he tilted his head to deepen it only to stop when-

"Potter-... SEV?!"

The two broke apart when a voice suddenly screeched out and James looked back to find Lily Evan's standing at the bottom of the stairs leading to the dorms in a nightgown and robe. Green eyes wide and filled with shock as she took in the scene. the common room was a mess, with furniture over turned and a scorched mark from a spell on the wall. Sirius was on the ground unable to stand and still struggling to undo the spell. But what had her attention was Potter on the floor kissing Severus. The Slytherin's face flushed red, "Lily-"

"There was so much noise, I wanted to check to make sure you were O.K but then-... what's going on here?!"

Severus almost shrunk down under James under her stare while the chaser swallowed hard before just letting out a dramatic sigh.

"Honestly, Evans. Hasn't anyone told you its rude to interrupt people when they're busy."

Lily glared hard at him but that didn't seem to matter much, because Severus had reached for his wand and before James could blink, he received yet another stinging hex to the face.

~ ONE YEAR LATER ~

It's been exactly one year.

A lot of adjustments were made in that time.

First and foremost they had to deal with the rumours circulating about what was happening that night in the Great Hall. Severus had suggested just ignoring the rumours until they eventually just wore themselves out but after a few weeks it became clear that that just wasn't going to happen.

Sirius came through yet again and just told everyone that it was a prank that just went very very weird. Snape had no knowledge of it, he was just as surprised as everyone else.

That seemed to appease the school for a while, until they started to notice the marauders or more specifically, James Potter, spending an inordinate amount of time around the Slytherin. That led to all sorts of horrifying rumours, including one where Snape was accused of using love potions on the Gryffindor chaser. Sirius tried to calm the masses yet again.

"Dumbledore threatened to expel them if they didn't start getting along, that's all."

James Potter and Severus Snape being forced to make nice seemed like a more plausible explanation than the two of them being friends. Though, if James were being honest, he kind of liked a few of the rumours that had started spreading. Specifically the ones about them dating and all that fighting from before being caused by sexual tension. That rumour was closer to the truth anyway. Severus disagreed.

James and Severus weren't dating, but they were much more civil with each other than before. James realised that trying to force Severus to bond with him had really been the worst idea and spent those first few weeks just apologising and trying to make it up to the raven. The pranking stopped along with the fighting though they still seemed to bicker every now and then. Most of the arguing had to do with Regulus.

It took a while to convince the Gryffindor chaser that there wasn't anything going on between him

and Regulus.

“It was barely more than a one-night stand.”

“A one-night stand?!” James almost shrieked and Severus rolled his eyes.

“Not that it has anything to do with you Potter, but we’re just friends.”

“But-“

“Do you want me to let you take me to Hogsmeade this weekend?” Severus asked looking the Gryffindor right in the eyes as he said this and James paused.

“Well yeah, of course.”

“Then stop pouting like the jealous brat you are and I’ll let you.” Severus said before letting out a soft sigh, “Regulus is my friend. I don’t have many of those. Are you going to try and make me stay away from him as well?”

James lips pursed into a tight line, “Of course not, you know I love you Sev. I want you to be happy.”

The raven then looked away, down to the book on the table before he spoke, “Then stop being an idiot. Regulus looks far too similar to his brother for me to ever think of him that way.”

“So, how did you end up doing whatever it is you did before?”

Severus looked up and shook his head ever so slightly, “It was his birthday. I didn’t have the money to buy him anything and he just... asked for a kiss. Things just sort of escalated from there.”

“But they haven’t since... right?”

Severus looked up at him and rolled his eyes again, “No, so you can stop whatever scheming it is that’s going on in your head right now.”

“I’m not-“

“Good. Because if Regulus becomes the victim of some random prank by an unknown assailant. I’m telling Black that it was you.”

James huffed out a sigh as he sank back into his seat in the library just as the raven turned the page of his book, “Well can I ask for something for my birthday?”

Severus looked back at him and gave him a very bored look, “I’m not letting you shag me for your birthday.”

James flushed just a bit, he was about to bring up Regulus’ birthday present but thought better of it, “No, I want you to come home with me, for Easter break.”

Severus turned and arched a brow at him, “What for?”

“So we can spend time together. When we’re at school we’re always being interrupted by Evans or Regulus or whoever. It’d be nice if I could just have you to myself for once. Besides, you know I don’t like you going back to your father. What about your Mum-”

“She’d refuse. I usually spend Easter and Christmas here anyway.” The raven paused, “What about your parents?”

“Sirius already lives with us. They wouldn’t mind if I brought home another friend.”

“And that’s how you’d introduce me; as your friend?”

James flushed even more, “Well yeah, because that’s what you are right?”

Severus looked away, “Right.”

“So…”

“Fine, I’ll go home with you.” James beamed when Severus looked at him again, those dark dark eyes locking onto his own and James was sure he was starting to look just like a tomato.

“But we’re not sleeping in the same bed.”

“Well, yeah of course not.” James said quickly and Severus scoffed as he just went back to his book.

It took some time to get around actually talking about the whole Dark Mark situation. Severus eventually admitted that taking the mark wasn’t necessarily something he’d wanted; just something that seemed like his best option at the time.

It took some time working through that one, with James promising to help the Slytherin in whichever way he could and Severus eventually and very reluctantly accepting the offer.

Severus had managed to avoid Malfoy for the most part and the blonde seemed to pick up on this growing disinterest fairly quickly. He became much less interested in the potions prodigy as well, or at least that’s how he tried to make it look. He insisted that persistently running after a half-blood was beneath him; though he still very obviously watched the raven from time to time. Mulciber, Avery and Wilkes seemed to follow suit. Rosier was the only one that didn’t really seem to give a toss about the factions rising out of Slytherin house and made it clear that he’d engage Snape and whoever he wanted whenever he bloody well felt like it.

That’s also around the time James and Severus started to bicker about Rosier as well.

It was a lot of work. Everything from the Slytherin allowing himself to trust James a bit more and the Gryffindor forcing himself to be more patient with Severus in return.

A full year later they’d managed to become friends, though James made it clear that he didn’t want them to just be friends he didn’t try to push either. He wanted… he needed Severus to give him some sort of sign, say or do something to let him know that it was a subject that they could try and broach again.

It was a week before Christmas break. It wouldn’t be long before final exams, so this would be the last time that any of the seventh years would be going home. After the break they’d all be occupied with studying and so James managed to convince Severus to go home with him for the Christmas holiday. Christmas morning, that’s when he plans on trying again and asking Severus to be more than just his friend.

He’d been a nervous wreck the week before when he was asking the Slytherin to go home with him again and it became very obvious to him that Severus knew he was planning something. Whether or not he knew exactly what wasn’t clear though.

The night before had been the full moon. James was grateful that he and the lads could go run about for a bit with Moony. It was a great way to blow off a little steam and by the time they got back the next morning he was feeling much better about it all.

They'd just stepped into their dorm room. With Sirius already yawning and Peter looking close to passing out. Moony was still in the hospital wing recovering and James decided that he'd pass out on his bed along with his friends before getting up for dinner later.

Severus knew about their plans for the night before. James knew he wouldn't be expecting the Gryffindor's presence till then. Besides, Severus said he'd be studying to try and get a head start on NEWT's so once James was changed and ready to sleep away the rest of his Saturday he was very surprised when Severus suddenly came bursting into the dorm room.

Peter squeaked in surprise. It took him a while to get used to the whole James and Severus thing. He'd looked shocked half to death when the other marauders told him about everything that happened in the week that he wasn't there, but for the most part he didn't seem to mind much.

"It actually explains a lot." The portly boy had said, "You fancying him makes more sense than always pranking him for no reason."

Sirius had rolled his eyes in annoyance. He'd been hoping that someone else would be just as outraged by the news as he was at first. No such luck. He'd been trying a bit harder to force the civility with Snape, it only seemed to get better after Regulus started talking to him again as a result of the civility. Conversations with the Slytherin became easier. He didn't immediately jump to try and insult or hex Severus at the slightest provocation anymore. Mostly because James would hex him if he tried.

When Severus came bursting into their room and slamming the door shut behind him that morning. Sirius had looked up and frowned before rolling his eyes.

"You gave him the password again?" he'd asked tiredly as he got on his bed but James ignored him.

His attention was focused on the Slytherin. Severus' eyes were wide and his skin was flushed, he was breathing hard as he stood with his back firmly against the door.

"Sev? What's wrong?"

The Slytherin blinked and paused. Looking at James like he'd seen a boggart.

"I-"

Before Severus could answer however there was a loud thump against the door. And another and another. So hard that Snape seemed to be using all of his strength to keep it shut. Sirius got up from his bed, Peter moved closer as well. James quickly moved towards the Slytherin.

"Sev-"

Before he could finish his sentence. The door burst open and Severus stumbled forward, right into James' chest. The Gryffindor made sure to tighten his grip to catch him.

"What on earth-"

"Don't touch him." a deep voice suddenly growled and James looked up at the figure that entered their dorm room. The marauders gaped.

The man that stood in the door was tall, lean but with the obvious definition of muscle on his arms under tan skin. Raven hair in a mess of tangles on his head and bright hazel eyes glared with fury, wearing a white shirt and grey school pants.

“James?!” Sirius shrieked and Peter’s eyes had all but bugled out of his head as they darted between James and-and James.

“What the hell?” James breathed and the James in front of him stepped forward to shut the door behind him with a loud slam before he spoke.

“He’s mine.” The figure growled lowly as he his glare intensified, “Now let him go.”

“What?”

That’s all James could manage before the other James suddenly reached out and wrenched Severus out of his grip.

“Hey! What do you think, you’re-“

And then James words died right in his throat as his apparent double dragged Severus in and locked their lips in a kiss. The Slytherin struggled in his grasp, hands going to the white shirt to clench and push as his mouth was ravaged right there in front of them until the taller raven pulled back with a gasp.

Severus glared hard, “Let me go this instant you-“

“I told you before and I’ll say it again. You’re mine Severus, I won’t have anyone else putting their hands on you.”

“What... WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON HERE?!”

De ja vu.

But James agreed. He couldn’t understand what was happening. It looked like him but obviously it wasn’t him and this other him was kissing Severus and apparently claiming him and-

“Sev?” James croaked out and the Slytherin looked over to Potter, he flushed all the way right up to his hair while his double’s hands ran all over Severus seeming to try and pull off his clothes.

“I should just claim you right here, so everyone knows who you belong to.”

Severus’ eyes widened even more. The marauders continued to gape. The raven let out a heavy sigh before he gave one more vicious tug and pulled himself free from the other’s grasp.

“Severus-“

Severus ran up to James, “I like you. So kiss me.”

“What?”

“I like you, now kiss me you idiot!”

Severus snapped and James quickly leaned forward to press a kiss on the Slytherin’s lips, lingering for just a bit when a loud humming filled the air and bright light flashed around the room.

Once the humming stopped and the light faded, they all saw that the other James had disappeared

and Severus let out a sigh.

“Thank Circe that’s over.”

“Sev...” James started, swallowing hard as he tried to wrap his mind around what just happened, “What-“

“I don’t know. I woke up and... he was in my bed and he refused to let me leave. I’m not even sure how he followed me out of the dorms, or where he got the clothes.” Severus stopped himself with another heavy sigh, “Someone cast that blasted spell on me.”

“What spell?”

“The one Black cast on you. A year ago?” James just stared at him and Severus rolled his eyes hard as his cheeks flushed again, “Reveal the heart’s desire?”

James frowned and then it hit him, “What?! Who would do that and when?!”

“I don’t know.”

“You didn’t tell anyone right?”

“No of course not.”

“Then how-“

“Uhh...” that’s when James and Severus looked up to see a very red looking Peter and an extremely guilty looking Sirius. Something immediately clicked in Severus’ head and he glared hard.

“I’m going to kill you, you half brained mutt!”

Sensing the serious murder intent Sirius moved back almost hiding behind Peter who was frozen at that point. James quickly reached out to stop Severus from attacking, grabbing a hold of the Slytherin’s waist to pull him back against his chest to stop him for reaching for his wand.

“Sev wait!”

“Potter, let me go!”

Sirius breathed a sigh of relief, “Thanks mate-“

“Don’t thank me! I should let him kill you! Why in Merlin’s name-“

“It was Peter’s idea!”

Peter squeaked yet again as he looked back at Sirius, “You cast it!”

“Because you told me to!”

“Peter?!”

Peter looked back at James and the still very pissed but at least unmoving Slytherin in his arms.

“We just... we just wanted to see if Snape liked you yet. You’ve been *friends* for a year but you said... you said you weren’t dating so I thought-I thought it might be a good idea.”

Severus turned his death glare on Peter and the blonde seemed ready to relieve his bowls right there and then.

“Then I’m killing you first.”

“Whoa whoa whoa, before anyone kills anyone else.” Sirius started, “I think it’s important to note that yes, while I did cast the spell on you yesterday; that thing that came running in here was very clearly James.”

James blinked, Severus’ eyes widened.

“And you said you like him so. I don’t think we should be the ones explaining anything right now.” Sirius finished and Severus started struggling yet again.

“I’m going to slaughter you mutt!”

Sirius flinched back, Peter looked ready to bolt until James turned the raven in his arms around and looked right into his eyes.

“Potter, let me-“

“You like me?”

Severus flushed all over again and James started to smile, “You do. You like me.”

“I-...” The raven let out one last sigh of frustration, he looked away, dark hair falling over his face as he spoke, “Fine, yes, I fancy you you arrogant berk.” And then he looked up again, “Now let me go so I can murder your mates.”

James’ smile grew only to suddenly fall into a frown, “Wait, that other one was taller than me... Do you think I’m short?!”

Severus blinked, “What?”

“The spell reveals your desires so you think I’m short, don’t you?”

“No.”

“Well then why was he at least a foot taller than me?”

“I don’t know.”

“And he looked bigger too.”

“Potter-“

“His eyes looked different too-“

“James-

“He was also way more aggressive than James.” Sirius suddenly cut in and Peter nodded

James’ expression twisted in surprise, “Wait, is that what you want me to be like-“

“Enough!” Severus leaned up and closed the distance between them, wrapping his arms around the Gryffindor’s neck to draw him as close as possible to give him a bruising kiss. James stumbled

back in surprise and let out a startled moan when the Slytherin worked his mouth open to slip his tongue inside to draw out his own. James back hit the wall, his arms tightened around Severus' waist and he let out another moan just as the other broke it.

Severus was breathing hard, "I want you. As you are. Satisfied?"

And almost like the previous argument didn't happen, James smiled, "Yeah."

Severus let out a deep breath when James spoke again, "Seriously though, why was he so aggressive?"

The raven looked away, James could see his flush even as his hair fell over his face as he spoke a bit more quietly.

"I expected... more."

"More."

"You've... remarkably, been a perfect little Gryffindor gentleman over the past few months. I was just... I expected something different."

"Really?"

"James, you were naming your kids a year ago. And you started taking him home every holiday." Sirius supplied, now much more relaxed since the danger seemed to have passed, "Moony and I were sure you'd have Snape pregnant before the end of the year. Peter thought it'd take six months."

Peter shrunk back a bit, "He was suddenly just talking about Snape all the time. I'm still surprised he hasn't started sleeping in here yet."

"I..." James flushed, "You need potions for male pregnancy."

"We figured Snape could probably brew them."

Severus glared, "And you thought I'd be willing to allow myself to be impregnated while in school?"

Peter shrugged, Sirius' head gave a tilt. "You like him right?"

Severus looked at them like they were morons, "I have no words, I'm leaving."

"Sev wait-" James said before Severus could pull out of his grasp, "You're still coming with me for the Christmas holidays right."

Severus paused, "Yes."

"Well good, because I'd like to introduce my parents to my boyfriend. But that would be difficult if he decided not to show. Can I write my parents Severus? And tell them, that I'll be bringing my boyfriend for Christmas?"

Severus stared at him, those onyx eyes filling first with surprise and then amusement. He arched a brow at the Gryffindor.

"I was under the impression that we'd already met?"

James grinned, "I love you."

Severus didn't answer, he leaned up and pressed a kiss against James' cheek.

"You're insane, however, I've been told that there's no difference." He leaned up towards James' ear and whispered, "now let me go so I can hex Black and Pettigrew."

James whispered back, "The frog hex for Sirius. Last time he ended up with warts for a week."

Severus scoffed just as James released him and he immediately spun around with his wand aimed at Sirius. The Animagus' eyes went wide-

"Snape-"

"Amphibious!"

"*Rrrribbit!*"

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

When Remus came back after he'd recovered from the full moon, they told him about what happened.

Later, Severus went to Lily so he could vent about what happened. Since he'd already told her about what happened before and she was very aware of his situation with James, she was the only one he could vent to.

Both, while agreeing that what Peter and Sirius had done was incredibly stupid, were disappointed that they hadn't seen the other James themselves.

After the holidays, after many many hours of persuasion they managed to get James and Severus to agree to a little experiment.

"This is disturbing." Sirius said with a cringe twisting his features while Remus just stared and Lily flushed.

"It's fascinating is what it is."

The common room was empty. The night before Severus spent the night in the Gryffindor dorms. Lily cast the spell on Severus and Remus cast it on James, since Sirius had vehemently refused to do it again after what happened last time.

Now, the common room is empty. They were sitting in the seating area of the room, with Sirius, Peter, Remus and Lily on the couch to the left, James and Severus on the couch to the right and... the other James and Severus on the armchair in front of them. Severus was perched on James' lap, arms wrapped around the other double's neck as he stared down with loving onyx eyes, while James kept biting and kissing at the other other double's neck his hands slowly stroking down the raven's back while his eyes glowed with lust.

"I love you James." Severus said and James pulled him in closer to his lap.

“Do you Severus? How much do you love me?”

“More than anything.”

James let out a shuddering breath against the raven’s neck, “I want to take you apart and I want to hear you screaming my name as I do, would you like that Sev?”

“Yes, Jamie. I want it so badly.”

Peter, Sirius, Remus and Lily all looked over to the real James and Severus. Both of whom had gone a bright red as they stared at their doubles in pure horror. Severus let his head drop so his hair would cover his face as he became even redder. James awkwardly cleared his throat as he shifted a bit on the couch.

“Okay, I’ll say it.” Lily said sitting up a bit more in her seat, trying to ignore the doubles as they continued to feel each other up and whisper all sorts of horrifying fantasies to each other.

“You two are together, right? So if this is what you want then-“

“That! Is not what I want.” Severus said very clearly almost glaring at his friend, Lily arched a brow before gesturing to the two in the armchair.

“Deepest desires come to light?”

“Lily has a point.” Remus added, “I mean, it’s not like we’d stop you from doing... that so, at the very least James I thought you’d want to-“

“I don’t want that either!”

They all looked at each other, Peter was next to speak.

“Then what do you want?”

James and Severus shared a look before the Slytherin answered, “I am not having this discussion in front of them.”

“Agreed.”

Lily let out a sigh, “Fine, we’ll go.” She got up from her seat and Remus got up as well. “Lunch is in an hour, we’ll meet you in the Great Hall?”

Severus said nothing and James just nodded, “Yeah.”

Peter and Sirius got up as well. Sirius gave the two in the arm chair a look, “You should probably do something about those two.”

They left the room out the portrait hole. James waited until he heard it close before he spoke.

“I like you as you are Sev, I don’t want you to change.” The Gryffindor took a deep breath, “It’s just... sometimes, it’d be nice if you told me that you liked me.”

Severus looked up at him, his lips pursed for a brief moment, “I already told you.”

“I’d like to hear it more often. I know there’s no one else I’d rather be with, but sometimes I’m not sure if you feel the same or if you’re just here because you think you have to be.” James admitted and Severus looked away again as the other continued, “I haven’t forgotten how this all started, I

practically blackmailed you into all of this-“

“You didn’t swear me to any oath that night. If I didn’t want to be around you then I wouldn’t be, you’re not making me do anything.” Severus said still not looking at the other. “If I didn’t want you touching me, I wouldn’t let you. If I didn’t want to kiss you then I wouldn’t let you do it.”

“But-“

And then Severus suddenly moved from his side of the couch until he was right beside the Gryffindor, hand braced on the back of the couch while the other was on the seat. “You’re a spoiled arrogant brat, if I didn’t want you then you wouldn’t have me.” And then he reached out to take James hand and brought it up to his cheek, “What I need from you is to show me, how you feel. Show me how much you love me and I’ll show you as well.”

James blinked and felt his flush return full force as the Slytherin spoke, Severus’ voice dropping to a whisper, “I’ve never... I want to feel *wanted*.”

The chaser swallowed hard, “I need to hear you say it. So, say it Severus.”

Severus let out a soft breath, leaned in and whispered against James’ ear.

“I love you James.”

James felt his chest fill with warmth and he immediately wrapped his arms around the raven to draw him close as whisper back just as softly, “I love you too Severus.”

Both leaned in and kissed, that’s when the room suddenly filled with bright light and loud humming filled the air. They quickly broke apart and looked up to find the two on the armchair were gone. Severus started to smile a little, he let out a scoff only to gasp when James moved and he was suddenly on his back on the couch with the Gryffindor on top of him; hands braced on either side of the Slytherin’s head.

“James-“

“You said I could have you, right?” James asked with a cheeky grin and Severus rolled his eyes hard.

“Are you asking for a charmed invitation?”

James laughed as he closed the distance between them, “You know, I could just *make* you ask for it.” He let once of his arms moved down over Severus’ chest to the edge of his jumped and moved in under his shirt.

Severus paused, “James-“

“But you’d have to ask me really nicely Sev.”

“James-“

“I’d need you to say please too.”

“James!”

A/N: End

Please review

I see so many ways that I, could love you till the day I die

Chapter Summary

Sirius casts a spell to reveal hidden love

Things happen

Chapter Notes

A/N: Same song different lyrics, the order of events in this one is a bit odd. Its present day, flash back then back to present day. Sort of... kind... not really. It reads a little oddly but I like it this way so

Warning for non-explicit sex (I was going to add a smut scene but then I realised that I haven't really put any smut in any part of this fic as of yet and some people aren't comfortable with smutty scenes. I usually put up tags for that sort of thing and I realised that I didn't put up any for this fic so I decided to veto the explicit smut at least for now. Maybe I'll add one later but I don't want to make any promises). somewhat coerced sex, magic made them do it vibes (you know how that song and dance goes) If any of this offends, please back away. Also some Regulus/Severus (I am also kind of into this ship now)

Apologies spelling, grammar and OOCness

Disclaimer: See previous chapters

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Severus was in the bedroom packing up his things.

After two years he'd finally gotten his Potions mastery. It was a lot of work. Everything from completing the compulsory brewing requirements in front of the board to creating and submitting his very own potion creation, Severus had expected to still have a few more years to complete it. But he'd gotten it all done in record time, making him the youngest wizard to ever receive the title of potions master.

For the first time in a very long time, he was proud of himself. There's so much he can do now, so many different avenues to pursue. He can finally get those patents on those potions that he's been working on, start selling his creations legally without fear of aurors breaking down his door. He can open up his own apothecary or even start his own company. There's so much he could do.

Unfortunately his options for what he actually *would do* were more limited. The raven sighed, pausing as he stared down at the bag on his bed.

He put it off for years. Making up every excuse he could think of to try and put it off for as long as he could, but now times up. Severus' last excuse had been that it would be beneficial for him to get

his potions mastery first before taking the plunge, well now he has it and in record breaking time as well.

Internally Severus cursed his ambition for driving him so far so damn quickly.

He's been putting it off for years, but he can't put it off any longer.

After news broke of his mastery Lucius contacted him, congratulating him on his achievement. With Lucius' letter came a gift; a brand-new lush set of potions master robes made from velvet, silk and silver thread with emerald stones woven into the embroidery along the edges around the collar. The box that the robes came in didn't have the Malfoy crest engraved on it. No. The crest on the front of the box very clearly belonged to the house of Riddle.

Severus resisted the urge to look over to the box sitting where he'd left it in the corner of the room and tried to just focus on his packing instead.

He's put it off for too long. He needs to make a decision. But it was hard.

When Lucius first told him about the Dark Lord and everything he could give him; Severus had been young, broken and desperate enough to desire all that the Dark Lord was trying to offer him. But as time went on he became less and less sure. Those doubts had settled in by fifth year and in sixth year-

Sixth year.

Severus resisted the urge to sigh as he looked to another corner of the room. To the other box that he received after the council informed him of his achievement. It was another pair of potions master robes; very similar to the ones he received from the dark lord, only those had accents of gold with sapphire and blue topaz stones woven in a pattern around the emerald ones.

After receiving those robes, Severus hadn't known what to do with himself at first. So he just stared at the box before shoving it away and trying to forget about it for a while. That seemed to be an impossible feat, especially considering the fact that the person that sent him the robes was the same person that sponsored him so he could get his mastery in the first place

Salazar, receiving the letter of acceptance from the mastery council had been a shocking moment. But only because of one very specific line.

Severus Tobias Snape's endeavour to achieve mastery of potions is sponsored by the house of Potter under the authority and free will of James Charlus Potter.

Severus had just frozen and stared at the letter for what felt like hours. Completely unsure of what to do. He hadn't added a name for a sponsor in his applications. Lucius had volunteered multiple times but Severus didn't want to give the blonde any more leverage over him than he already had. Regulus had offered, also multiple times, but their relationship was still too new. Severus didn't feel comfortable taking that kind of money from him.

Usually under those circumstances the council would expect you to come up with some other form of financial aid or they'd put your name on the registry for prospective masters and any interested parties could then choose to sponsor you.

It was a shocking moment when he realised that Potter was going to sponsor him. He really hadn't known how to react.

His fifth-year self would have stormed right up to the Potter Manor and told Potter exactly where

he could stuff his bleeding sponsorship. Sixth-year Severus... Considering his mental state concerning Potter and everything that was going on between them at the time, sixth year Severus would have done something entirely too stupid to comprehend.

But right then at the age of eighteen, Severus wasn't sure what to do. It was public knowledge at the time that the patriarch of the Potter family, Fleamont Potter, had passed on that very same week; almost one year after his wife's passing. Showing up and telling Potter where to get off would've been unnecessarily cruel despite their tense history... actually more because of it.

But he did show, three days after the funeral at about ten o'clock at night.

Potter had just stared at him with wide eyes for a moment before inviting him inside.

The manor, or what he saw of it in the short time he was there, looked clean enough. The house elves must have been keeping things in order since Potter himself didn't look like he was in very good shape.

He looked tired. There were dark circles around his eyes, his clothes while clean looked incredibly dishevelled and his hair looked like an even bigger chaotic nest than normal.

"You're a mess Potter." Severus said as he was led into the sitting room and Potter had paused to stare at the other in surprise for a moment before letting out a scoff.

"I see you're just as delightful as always." He said, immediately walking over to a decanter of whiskey on a pedestal in the corner, it looked about half empty, "I'm in mourning you know, you're supposed to be nice to me."

Severus watched as he filled a tumbler and drank down the whole thing before filling it again. The raven let out a deep breath as he marched over and snatched the drink from Potter's hand before he could drink it.

"What the hell-" Potter glared before just picking up the decanter again, "If you wanted a drink then all you had to do was ask."

"I'd prefer it if you were at least moderately sober in my presence Potter." Severus said as he spilled the contents of the glass in the nearest pot plant before grabbing the decanter and doing the same.

Potter frowned at him, "That cost a fortune you know."

"Apparently you have more than enough money to waste." He said, putting the now empty bottle back in its spot and put the stopper back to close it, "I received my letter for acceptance from the council regarding my mastery application. You're sponsoring me?"

James swallowed hard, "Yeah and?"

"Why?"

"Why not?"

"You don't have a reason to."

James let out a bark of laughter, "There's plenty reason."

"Such as?"

Hazel eyes snapped up to meet his own for one moment of silence, “I was in the ministry getting my documents done for my Auror training. They’d just added your name on the registry. I heard them whispering about how Malfoy was planning to sponsor you.”

Severus let out a silent breath, “Lucius...”

“I know you don’t give a single shitty sod about me, but I still care enough not to let that git get his claws into you.” Potter spat as he walked across the room and over to the cabinet to grab, another bottle of whiskey.

The raven watched him for a moment, but walked over before he could pull off the stopper and grabbed the bottle to set on the table.

“I despise alcohol, do not drink in my presence.”

“You don’t get to tell me what to do.” He said lowly and Severus rolled his eyes hard.

“Potter-“

“Why are you here? Come to watch me suffer one last time?”

Severus just kept him in a level stare. “I wanted to thank you.”

Potter blinked, “Thank me?”

“If you didn’t sponsor me it would’ve taken me years longer and I would have been forced to resort to other avenues to get it done.” Malfoy is what he meant and they both knew it, “So, thank you.”

“You... you’re welcome.”

“I’m not sure how long it’ll take but I’ll pay you back for every penny-“

“I don’t want your fucking money, Snape.” Potter interrupted his eyes filled with annoyance, “I didn’t do this so you’d owe me.”

“Then why did you do it?”

“You know why.”

Severus instinctively took a step back when he realised just how close they were. Potter noticed, his eyes narrowing slightly at the movement.

He turned to walk away, “It’s been ages, one would think that you would’ve moved on from such petty teenage-“

Before he could get very far, Potter grabbed a hold of his arm and dragged him back to turn him around and lock their lips in a kiss. Severus tensed, his hands grabbing hold of Potter’s forearms and clenching tight while the hazel eyed wizard drew him closer to deepen it, just as he worked Severus’ mouth open the raven pulled back. It’s the taste of whiskey that did it, the smell of alcohol that dealing with his father taught him to despise.

“Stop it.” He hissed despite the flush that coloured his cheeks. Potter didn’t seem to be listening as he let out a shuddering breath, those hazel eyes darkened as they fixed on Severus’ lips.

“You still feel the same. Severus-“

“Let me go.” Severus said as he pulled free from the other’s grasp and walked across the room towards the exit when-

“I can’t.”

Severus stopped and looked back, “What-“

“I can’t let you go. I don’t want to.” Potter said simply and Severus swallowed hard before just looking away and leaving the house.

That was two years ago. That was the last time they spoke.

Severus hadn’t heard anything from Potter until just last month, before his mastery was announced and the box arrived.

He shut his eyes, took in yet another deep breath as he tried to will these turbulent thoughts away when-

“Still packing.” A pair of arms wove themselves around his waist and a chin came to rest on his shoulder. Severus swallowed hard and forced a smile on his lips as he opened his eyes and glanced back at Regulus who immediately leaned over a bit more to press a kiss on his lips that he returned.

“Just about done.”

The younger man nodded.

He’d grown into himself quite a bit over the past few years. He grew taller, stronger, lost a bit of that baby fat that clung stubbornly to his cheeks and lost some of the roundness to his face. He looked less like a faded younger copy of his brother and more like... himself. Severus was finally able to appreciate those stormy grey eyes and that mischievous smile in a way that didn’t make his stomach turn.

It took some time for this to happen. But Severus is glad that it did. Regulus was there when Severus needed him. He helped the older man move on after... after things happened.

“You know, you don’t have to leave.” Regulus said rocking a little with Severus in his grasp, “I know you only agreed to stay here till you finished your mastery but, that doesn’t mean you have to go.”

Severus shook his head, “I need my own space for... there are decisions I need to make and I’d rather not have anyone around me once I make them.”

Regulus let go and went to stand beside the raven, “You think Lucius will retaliate if you decide to refuse?”

“Wouldn’t Bellatrix?”

Regulus shrugged, “She’s a Lestranger now. With mother and father gone the fate of the house of Black isn’t any of her concern. Sirius isn’t a concern either, I heard that these days he’s preoccupied with Potter’s wedding.”

Severus tensed briefly. Regulus noticed but didn’t comment on it, the way he ignored anything Potter related in Severus’ world, he just kept going. “Besides, Cissa wouldn’t mind what I chose to do.”

Then Severus let out a soft sigh and smiled, "I was hoping to see her before. everything happens."

"You know Lucius wouldn't allow that." Regulus said with a sigh before shaking his head, "I'm not scared of Bella, not anymore. I'm more concerned about what'll happen to you."

"I'll be perfectly fine Regulus."

"But, you know that I'll always be there no matter what."

Severus turned and looked the younger man right in the eye, "You are not taking the mark just because of me."

"I'm not letting you go it alone either, I love you Severus--"

"Regulus--" Severus was cut off just as he took a step back as Regulus reached out to put his hands on either side of his face.

"I know, I know you're not ready to say it back. But I mean it." He said leaning up to press a kiss on Severus' lips, "I just want you happy Sev, I'll do whatever I need to to make that happen."

Severus shook his head, feeling his face flush slightly at those words. "You're entirely too sentimental."

Regulus smiled, "And you act like you don't enjoy it."

Severus rolled his eyes before Regulus kissed him again, pulling the older man close and down to the bed. He dragged his fingers through Severus' hair and turned them over so he was on his back. Severus let him, letting his hands rest on Regulus' hips as the other started to grind into him and for the moment he let himself forget about... everything.

About the two boxes in the corners of his room, the letter from Lucius, the Potter wedding which was only days away. He focused only on Regulus on the soft press of lips against his own, the hands gently stroking all along his sides and the slow careful slide of skin against skin as he gasped softly against Severus' skin.

These were good things to focus on. Good because it was so different. Different from those slightly chapped lips that once tried to claim his own, like a dementor sucking in every last bit of his soul from his chest. Different from the rough broom calloused hands that tried to drag him in right under his skin. Different from the harsh almost bruising movements joined by those desperate pleas whispered harshly into his hair.

It was different. Different was good. Different was sane. Different just barely managed to stop him from thinking about sixth year.

Different almost helped him forget those words that have been ringing in his ears since he left the Potter manor two years ago.

"I can't let you go. I don't want to."

It would be two days later when he would be reminded of those words again.

He'd gone to Diagon Alley to do some last-minute shopping, just a few odds and ends to tie him over while he was living in his temporary apartment. News of his mastery had hit the Prophet, those that noticed him would whisper and stare, a few of the braver ones actually tried to engage him in conversation that he promptly ignored. He'd planned on going to the apocathery while there

to restock some of his supplies only to realise that that would garner entirely too much attention considering the circumstances so he headed back early. Apparating in front of the house only to regret that decision when he recognised the figure that was standing in front of the door at 12 Grimmauld place after they'd turned around.

"Potter?"

The hazel eyed wizard seemed shocked to see him at first, eyes wide and mouth agape for a moment before he quickly collected himself and cleared his throat.

"Afternoon Snape."

Severus just stared at him in silence for a moment.

"I'm not sure if you're aware of it but Sirius Black hasn't come to this house since his parents died."

James started walking forward, towards the gate that Severus still stood in front of. "I know."

He let out a silent breath, "Regulus isn't here either, from what I understand he had errands to run. He won't be back till later."

"I'm not here to see him either."

"Then why are you here?"

"I wanted to see you."

"Why?"

Potter stopped right behind the gate, swallowed and then spoke, "Remember when you came to see me, after my father's funeral? You said you'd pay me back for my sponsorship."

Severus almost frowned, "I also told you I wasn't sure how long that would take."

"And I told you that I don't want your money. I'd like something else instead, as payment and then I'll consider us even."

Severus' eyes narrowed ever so slightly, "What do you want?"

"Coffee."

"What?"

"Buy me a cup of coffee, actually sit down and drink something with me and I'll call it even. You won't owe me anything."

Severus still didn't understand, "What?"

Potter sighed, "Look, you've made it clear multiple times that you'd rather snog a dementor than spend time with me."

"What's your point?"

"My point is, under the circumstances this is an even trade. We'll get something to drink, you actually talk with me and then afterwards you'll never have to see me again."

Severus let out a silent breath, “Why?”

Those hazel eyes locked onto his own even behind the frame of those round spectacles and Severus felt himself tense for the briefest moment.

“You know why.”

It was Severus’ turn to swallow thickly, resisting the urge to nervously lick his lips or bite them. Curse Lily for transferring such an awful habit over to him-

Lily.

“Aren’t you getting married in a few days Potter?” Severus drawled and he almost scoffed at the way the other tensed, “Exactly what would your future wife think if she knew what you were doing right now?”

To his surprise, Potter didn’t rise to his bait. At least not the way that Severus had hoped, “Does it matter? It’s not like you feel anything for me anyway so, what’s the problem with a cup of coffee between school mates?”

“School mates?”

Potter leaned in closer, hands braced on the gate with to lock bright hazel with onyx black, “Unless, you think having a drink with me is a problem. Since I’m getting married and all.”

Severus’ eyes narrowed at the implication, “Not on your life you arrogant brainless twat.”

“Well then, Snivellus,” Potter smirked, “Shall we get going? Or would you like to get cleaned up for me first? I don’t mind waiting,” James’ eyes flickered down to Severus robes, “Between you and me, I’m not particularly fond of the idea of touching you when you have Regulus’ drool all over you.”

Snivellus? Really? He’s not a child anymore.

“Jealous, Potter? And what makes you think I’d let you lay a single one of your slimy fingers on me.”

“You probably wouldn’t, you’d probably hex me if I even tried-”

“For once you’re absolutely right; I would.”

“-but that’s half the fun isn’t it?” Potter said with his smirk widening a little more into a smile and Severus folded his arms over his chest.

“You’ve managed to surprise me; I never took you for a masochist.”

“I’m not. I’m just having fun. I enjoy a bit of flirting before the foreplay and then of course, well-”

“I am not now, nor will I ever flirt with you.”

“Keep telling yourself that, Snape.” Potter then pulled back to open the gate and then walked right into Severus’ personal space, the raven quickly stepped back and Potter’s smile grew.

“Shall we go then?”

Snape’s jaw clenched, “I do this, you never come near me again.”

“Deal.”

“Fine.” Severus said, letting out a quiet sigh as he slipped by the other through the gate. “I need to go inside first.”

“Getting dolled up for me? Really, you could give a nearly married man the wrong idea Sev.”

Severus stopped right in his tracks and spun around, “Don’t ever call me that.”

Potter opened his mouth only to stop when some sort of realisation seemed to dawn on him and he smirked all over again.

“If we’re doing this. And I’m never going to see you again, then you have to call me James and I call you Sev, or Severus, or kitten whichever you prefer-”

“I change my mind, go to hell.” Severus said shortly and turned to storm into the house-

“If you don’t, you’ll always owe me Snape.”

Severus looked back, “I thought you weren’t doing this so I’d owe you.”

“*I’ve* changed my mind.” Potter said leaning against the gate, “That sponsorship cost thousands of galleons Snape. You’ll owe me for years. I’ll never leave you alone, I’ll come see you at least once a month maybe once a week, multiple times a week-“

“Fine. *James*.” Severus bit out, “But if you call me anything other than my name, I will kill you.”

“So love’s off the table too then?”

Severus’ eyes narrowed into the coldest glare but surprisingly James just huffed out a scoff.

“Fine *Severus*, I’m ready whenever you are.”

Severus’ jaw clenched in annoyance and he quickly made his way into the townhouse, adjusting the wards before disappearing inside. He dumped all the things he bought onto the bed, the little shrunk figures sitting there for a moment before he enlarged them and then got to work on changing his clothes before he headed downstairs. This won’t take long, he’ll be back before Regulus so he decided that he didn’t need to leave a message for the younger man. He could tell him all about this train wreck later.

Severus left the house and made sure all the locks and wards were in place before heading towards the wizard at the gate who seemed to be staring very openly.

“What?”

He asked and James’ eyes wandered from the raven’s head down to his feet before going back up again, “So you did get dressed up for me.”

He was in muggle clothes, a royal blue button up shirt with dark jeans and black shoes, he had a cloak around his shoulders for practicality. Severus rolled his eyes hard, “This isn’t for you.”

“Then what-“

“If I’m going to be seen in public with you, I’d rather it not be anywhere I would be recognised. We’re going to muggle London.” Severus said dragging a hand through his hair and the raven locks slipped in and out of place, one of the benefits of having not brewed today. “You’ll need to

change as well.”

“What?”

James blinked out of some sort of stupor and Severus frowned, “Clothes Potter, you can’t walk around muggle London looking like that.”

“Oh, right. That’s fine.” He said slipping his wand from its holster. Severus was surprised that he didn’t instinctively tense the way he used to in school any time Potter or any of his cunts had their wands out.

James muttered a spell and waved his wand around himself, the clothes he wore changed from dark brown and burgundy robes, auror robes Severus faintly realised, to a burgundy shirt with, dark jeans and a brown jacket, his boots stayed the same though.

Severus almost glared bitterly, he’d forgotten the stupid twat’s transfiguration grades had been better than his.

“Like what you see?”

Severus didn’t dignify that one with a response. “Let’s just get this over with.”

They got to their destination quickly enough, apparating together was just easier since Severus was the one who knew where they were going. Even if the way Potter looked at him once they finally got to the other side would surely haunt his dreams later.

They shrunk their cloaks and sat down at a downtown café, a charming little corner that Severus liked to go to sometimes when he just wanted to get away from the world of magic for a bit. They sat in a booth by one of the large French windows, with plush emerald green seats and entirely too many condiments in the little silver holder in the centre of the oak table.

The waitress had just taken their orders and hurried away when Potter spoke.

“You come here often?”

“What?”

James looked around himself for a moment, eyes lingering on the counter, “I’m just wondering. Plus that girl seemed like she knew you.”

Severus looked at the other for a moment, briefly debating the option of just telling Potter to piss off but thought better of it. Being a bit more civil might make this situation less painful.

“I come here from time to time, though she’s new. I think she might recognise me from the last time I was here.”

“Oh, I never thought you’d like places like this.” Potter started as he reached out to the container and started taking out the little packets of sugar and cream, staring into the reflection of the silver container. “It seems a bit too muggle for you.”

“Because you know so much about me.”

“I thought I did, I used to watch you all the time in school so I thought I had a pretty good idea.” Potter explained, “I couldn’t believe your favourite colour is blue, I thought for sure it’d be black or green.”

Severus opened his mouth to ask how Potter knew that only to realise- Lily, of course.

“Did you get the robes I sent you?” Potter suddenly asked and Severus frowned.

“Do I owe you for those as well?”

“No, those were a gift. Congratulations by the way, on getting your mastery.”

Severus couldn't even snap back at that one, he wanted to desperately in fact but-

“Thank you.” He paused and then finished, “I noticed the robes you were wearing. Training complete?”

Potter's face flushed ever so slightly, “Yeah, a while ago actually. I only got the robes today though.”

“I... congratulations.” Was all he said and yet Potter still beamed at him.

“Thanks.”

Just then the waitress returned and set their drinks down. James got his coffee and Severus opted for tea. Severus busied himself with stirring in the sugar and cream and Potter did the same until.

“Did... Did you get the invitation? For the wedding.”

Severus tensed, “I did.”

“Are you-“

“No, I'm not going to your wedding.”

“Why not?”

“I'm only with you right now to make sure I never have to see you again. Add the mere idea of being in Black's presence and I'm not quite sure why you think, I'd ever even entertain the thought.”

Potter's jaw seemed to clench for a brief moment, “You wouldn't even go for Lily?”

“I doubt she'd want me there.”

“How do you know she doesn't?”

“Does she?”

Potter stayed quiet and Severus scoffed, “Exactly.”

He's not surprised, they're fight had been ugly to say the least. Severus was behaving differently. He'd been off. So Lily asked if it had anything to do with the Marauders to which Severus tensed. He couldn't tell her the truth. He couldn't tell her that they were the problem, because then he'd have to tell her what happened with them and...

He just wasn't ready yet, not when he still hadn't figured out exactly what was going through his head. Lily had frowned and pouted and said how she thought that things were better, that James wasn't pranking him anymore. She said that she was thinking about going out with him and giving him a chance. How she was hoping Severus could get along with him since she decided that she'd

like to be with him. James was always trying so hard to impress her after all. This girl that James apparently didn't even like.

When she said that... something inside Severus pulled tight and he tensed even more. Things went horribly wrong and they started arguing. He can't even remember how he got so worked up about it.

He called her a brainless superficial tart.

She called him a bitter lonely bigot.

They didn't speak after that day. Severus felt bad about it, he regretted saying the things he said. He would've apologised if she didn't very clearly want nothing to do with him.

Potter suddenly gave a dramatic sigh as he picked up his steaming cup. "I guess it would be quite awkward wouldn't it."

Severus said nothing as he took a sip from his own cup as Potter continued.

"The love of my life in the same room with my future wife, the tension alone would be awful."

The raven almost choked. He quickly caught his breath and looked up to glare at James who was wearing a smirk. He sneered.

"Pining James?"

To his ever-evolving surprise with anything concerning this arrogant toad, James just matched his gaze.

"I never stopped Severus. I meant what I said two years ago."

"You're getting married."

"I want to move on with my life. I would've preferred it if you were the one I was marrying, but you don't want me. I can't force you to love me back."

"So you're going to trap her with you, because you can't get what you want."

"No, I love her. I care about Lily very deeply."

"Then what--"

"Remus asked me sometime ago; he asked me who I'd choose if I had a choice, if I could have you. I couldn't answer him because I knew I'd choose you. But you don't want me, I'm trying to just accept that and move on."

Severus paused, "Does she know?"

"Should I tell her? I don't see the point." James said taking another sip from his cup, "It's not like anything is going to come from this so, why upset her unnecessarily?"

Severus watched the other for a moment, before setting down his cup and frowning. "Why are you here?"

"You brought me here."

“No you-“ He took in a deep breath, the idiot was smirking at him and he resisted the urge to glare, “Why did you come to see me? If you know how futile all of this is then why bother with... this?”

“Oh you know, stubborn Gryffindor pride and all that.” James said dismissively with a shake of his head, “I think part of me was hoping I could maybe soften you up a bit if I tried again. Remember after we... after you broke the spell, valentines day was about a month later, we were at Honeydukes and Remus suggested I get you something, Sirius said not to because you probably hate sweets – and me just in general. I kicked myself for ages after Lily told me that you actually like chocolate. I was pissed that I never tried harder... that’s not what I’m doing right now, again, I know I can’t make you like me. I just... I just wanted to see you, see what it would’ve been like if we were ever just normal together.”

Severus didn’t say anything to that, just lifted his tea again when-

“Besides, this was nice... Blue looks really good on you by the way. I mean, I’ve always liked the way you looked but, you look good.”

“...alright?” It didn’t come out sounding like a question but in Severus’ head he felt like it should’ve been, he quickly shook the thought away before he spoke. “Though I’m slightly surprised, the only compliment you paid me in school was how greasy my hair was.”

“It was, in first year. I just kept saying it because it seemed like the easiest way of getting your attention. And anyway, I was always more focused on your eyes.”

Severus resisted the urge to look up and just kept sipping on his tea.

“You do look good though, I’m glad you agreed to doing this.” James said as he reached for his own cup to drink before suddenly giving a shrug, “Besides, if nothing else, this’ll make great wank material for later.”

Severus almost spit out his tea, “Excuse me?”

“You look good in blue.” And the stupid twat had the utter nerve to blush as he said this.

“I...” Severus’ huffed, “Is this your attempt at flirting? Because if it is, you’re failing miserably.”

“No not really, I figured I might as well get it all out while I still have a chance. I’m sure you’d agree; it’s indecent for a married man to spout such vulgarities in the presence of their wife’s best friend, about said wife’s best friend.”

Severus’ eyes narrowed in disbelief, “How are you enjoying this?”

James laughed, “I have no idea, you’ve always brought out the worst in me. Made me feel things I didn’t like or understand, I didn’t realise that I enjoyed it until it was too late.” And then he shook his head, “What about you, Severus? I know you don’t like me, but do you still hate me?”

It was odd, but he was taken aback by the question. He looked away, to the window where cars and people passed by. “I don’t have the time or the energy to hate anyone, let alone hate you. Besides, after today, you’ll officially be out of my life. How could I hate you then?”

“Is that an invitation?”

“No, it’s not.”

James started to grin, “Because I could stick around and inspire some more loathing in you. If

that's what you'd like."

"*No it's not.*" Severus hissed, "Honestly you're more insufferable than ever. I'm surprised I've managed to suppress the urge to strangle you so far."

"So you do want to put your hands on me. I knew it!"

Severus gave him a look of disbelief, "Do you only hear what you want to hear?"

"Not always. I've never heard you say that you love me." James started, "Outside, of the wank fantasies anyway. You're usually much nicer in those, particularly before I cum in you."

Neither one noticed that their waitress had just come back with a new steaming cup on a tray, only for her eyes to widen comically and her face to flush. Severus froze along with James until the auror suddenly spoke with a smile.

"It's alright, I'm joking. I'm getting married soon. He's just my mistress."

Severus gaped, "I am not--"

"I'm marrying his best friend too."

"James!"

"I'll... come back in a few minutes." The girl quickly scurried away and Severus gave James a dark glare.

"What the hell--"

James suddenly leaned over the table towards the raven's ear and Severus immediately tensed.

"At the counter, that girl, the man she's talking to; did you notice?"

"Notice what--"

"Don't make it too obvious." James said just as Severus was about to look over in his agitated state, "Slowly, fourth seat from the left."

Carefully without turning his head, Severus let his eyes run over the counter at the front of the café and almost frowned at the man he saw hunched over in one of the stools. The waitress was indeed talking to him, she gestured to their booth before walking back to the kitchen with that steaming cup still on her tray.

James lifted a hand to brush Severus' hair behind his ear and the raven resisted the urge to tense. "I noticed the mark on his arm when I walked in, everyone else in here is a muggle and when I realised that he was watching us..."

Severus frowned, he kept his gaze on the man, there was nothing particularly remarkable about him. Dark hair, blue eyes, he was dressed in muggle clothes but-

The man was hunched over his drink, glaring at the colourful mural behind the counter on the wall. He moved his arm to take a sip of his drink and that's when Severus saw it too.

Severus froze, he wasn't sure what to do with himself. What would a Death Eater be doing here?

"You knew this whole time and said nothing--"

“Yes.”

Severus looked at him, “Why?”

“I figured it’d drive Malfoy crazy once he found out.” James said with a grin and Severus blinked, before he could respond James pressed a kiss on his lips before pulling away completely to sit back in his seat.

“I... Do that again and I’ll hex you.” Severus could feel himself flush just a bit, but he ignored it. “What makes you think he’s here because of Malfoy?”

“Are you saying he isn’t?” James asked with an arched brow, “I’ll bet, that cup the girl was coming here with was spiked and blue eyes over there was supposed to bring you back to him.”

Severus couldn’t help but lick his lips, resisting the urge to look over at the man, “How do you know it wasn’t just poison, or that it was spiked at all. How do you know the first one’s weren’t spiked?”

“He only started talking to her after we got our drinks. Let’s bet on it. I bet the girl comes back with the tea. You’re a potions master, I’m sure you know how to detect their presence in food.”

“Yes.”

“If its not spiked then we cut this short and go our separate ways right now.”

“And if it is?”

“You give me a kiss.”

Severus couldn’t help but roll his eyes hard at that one, “You’re unbelievable.”

“Do we have a deal?”

Severus let out a quiet sigh, “Fine.”

James then glanced back at the counter before turning back. “Here she comes.”

The waitress stopped gave them a strained smile as she cleared her throat, “Refills.”

She set down two cups, one with tea in front of Severus and the other with coffee for James before picking up their empty cups.

“We didn’t order refills.”

Severus said shortly and the girl shrugged slightly, “We have a special today. Two for one. Enjoy.”

She quickly turned and walked away and James arched a brow at the raven. Severus sighed as he slipped his wand from its holster under the table and muttered a spell.

His cup glowed a faint purple, James’ glowed green with thousands of little silver specks.

James leaned forward to get a look at his cup, “What does that mean?”

“Sleeping potions.”

“For both of us?”

“No, it seems yours was laced with poison.”

James frowned, “Well that’s just mean.”

Severus looked up at the counter, the man wasn’t looking at them and he let out a low growl.

“Hey.” There was a hand on the one that Severus had on the table and James was frowning in concern. “Are you alright?”

“Lucius had no right.” He muttered quietly.

“You think it was him too?”

“Sleeping potion with draconite. I used to help him with his potions essays right through NEWT’s. The poison was one of my creations; first it causes paralysis and then it freezes your blood right in your veins, hardens it like cement. I called it Basilisks breath. Lucius was the only one that knew about it... Bastard.”

“We figured it out though right?”

Severus looked at him and then looked at the man. The barista had just set a fresh cup of whatever he was drinking down in front of him at the counter. Teacup, so tea. The potions master muttered a spell under his breath and the contents of James’ poisoned cup disappeared. James head gave a tilt just as Severus spoke.

“Tell me, Potter-“

“You promised to call me James.”

“Do you remember that spell you used to switch the potion I made in fourth year with your own?”

James scoffed, “How could I? Best potions marks I ever got in school.” And then the implication suddenly clicked in his head and a smirk spread over his lips. He slipped his wand from its holster and looked back at the man at the counter eyes focused on the cup in front of him before muttering a spell of his own.

The tea in Severus’ cup vanished before seeming to reappear all over again.

Just then the man seemed to look back at them, Severus quickly reached out to grab a hold of James’ collar and pull him in for a kiss. James let out a squeak of surprise before he shut his eyes and leaned into it. Severus opened one eye and noticed that the blue-eyed man had looked away again, still glaring at the wall as he reached for his cup.

Severus broke the kiss, eyes now trained on the counter.

“James?”

“What?”

“Pay attention!” Severus hissed at the oddly dopey look on James’ face and the auror quickly cleared his throat as he looked back at the counter.

“Right, yeah.”

The man took a sip from his cup, and then another and then his cup hit the floor, shattering just as he fell off his chair and hit the floor hard as well.

One of the waitresses rushed around to check on him while the barista cried out in alarm leaning over the counter.

James let out a snort and had to hide his laughter in his hand while Severus scoffed, reaching into his pocket to pull out his wallet. “We should leave.” He left a few muggle bills on their table and got up, James followed him. Quietly slipping by the commotion at the counter and right out the door. Once they were outside James didn’t stop himself from laughing.

“That was brilliant!”

Severus shook his head, despite the slight smile that pulled at his lips. “You cast the spell. I hope you know exactly what you’re going to tell your employer once they find out and trace your magical trail.”

“He’s a Death Eater, the git deserves worse.” James said lightly, “I’m a little disappointed you just banished the poison.”

“Firstly, he was drinking tea, not coffee. Secondly, if I’d used the poison it might’ve been linked back to me.” And then Severus started to frown, “Basilisks breath is one of the potions I’m getting patented. If only so it can be on the ministry’s restricted list. If Lucius had managed to poison you, even if the sleeping potion hadn’t worked on me-“

“You would’ve taken the fall and then you’d have no choice...” James’ face fell as well before he suddenly glared, “Bastard’s a real piece of work, isn’t he?”

“That’s one way of putting it.” Severus said dragging a hand through his hair when James suddenly stopped.

“Maybe its time for us to go back.”

Severus turned to look at him, they were standing just at the mouth of an alley. “You won your bet. I thought you’d have me running all over London to entertain... whatever this is.”

“You know exactly what this is.” James said with a soft sigh, “But, I still think we should go back.”

Severus shrugged, “Fine.”

James moved forward and wrapped an arm around the raven’s waist, “What-“

“I know the way.” He smirked and before Severus could protest James apparated right there and then. Severus only hoped that no one saw them along the street. Back on Grimmauld street, outside of number 12, Severus had to take a moment to compose himself. He hated side-along apparition, it always made his head spin for a few moments, especially going as suddenly as James had done.

Letting out a deep breath he finally pulled back and found the stupid berk grinning at him, “Just can’t keep your hands off of me, can you?”

Severus rolled his eyes as he pulled away completely, “Piss off you egotistical twat. Pull a stunt like that again and I’ll have you begging for death.” He walked determinedly opening the gate to walk up to the door.

James laughed, “I love it when you talk dirty to me Severus.”

“Shut up.”

“Wait! One more thing.”

Severus stopped and turned to face the other just as James caught up, spelling his robes back to normal before reaching into his pocket. He tapped his wand on the tiny object before it enlarged into a medium sized box with gold and silver wrappings. He handed it to the potions master and Severus took it.

“What’s this?”

“Nothing nefarious or anything like that, I think we can agree I’m a bit too old for pulling pranks.” James shrugged, “It’s just chocolates.”

“Chocolates?”

“A late Valentines gift.” James then leaned in and pressed a lingering kiss on the raven’s forehead, “Goodbye Severus.”

And then he turned and walked away back towards the gate, Severus’ hand clenched on the box and he couldn’t stop himself from speaking.

“In sixth, when I... when the spell broke, I didn’t hate you but I was angry-“

“I know, being in love with you didn’t make up for everything.”

“Damn it you presumptuous idiot, let me finish what I’m saying.” Severus huffed and James frowned, “I was angry. I was upset. You spent all of that time making me miserable... when all you really had to do from the very beginning; was just ask. You spent all those years begging Lily, why couldn’t you have just *asked* me?”

“Severus-“

“I-...” Another sigh and he turned back to the house, “You’re getting married James, I wish you and Lily all the best.”

Severus opened the door and stepped inside to shut the door behind him, only to belatedly realise that he hadn’t had to deal with the wards first. He tensed.

“Regulus?”

He called out, stepping forward into the house as he took off his cloak and the younger man appeared in the doorway from the kitchen with a smile.

“Severus... back from your errands?”

Severus frowned, “You’re back early.”

“I got back a while ago, I started the tea already. Hungry?” he said with that smile still in place and Severus just shook his head.

“Maybe later, I should sort out my things first.”

“Alright, later then.”

He said and Severus just gave him a small smile as he made his way up the stairs and into his room. Regulus watched him go, a frown pulling at his lips before he turned back and glared at the door.

~ FLASH BACK ~

Through the portrait door and passed the common room where he saw a few familiar faces chatting in front of the fireplace. Rosier looked up from where he sat chatting with Avery and gave him a curt nod and Regulus smiled as he walked in, almost seeming to want to get up to engage him in conversation the way he usually does. Severus just gave a nod in return before continuing on his way. Regulus sunk back into his seat in apparent disappointment.

Regulus was... nice. Severus liked him well enough. He was one of the few people that he could really refer to as a friend. The younger wizard didn't seem to mind his blood status, he seemed happy just being around Severus and Severus in turn appreciated the other for it. But just as a friend.

It wasn't lost on him how the younger Black looked at him, the gleam of adoration in those stormy grey eyes made it very clear after all. In a different world Severus might have been willing to give into Regulus' less than subtle advances if the younger wizard didn't look so similar to his bastard of a brother.

No, there was too much unpleasantness between Severus and Black for Severus to ever even entertain the idea of... entertaining his younger brother.

It was a pity though. Severus wasn't exactly spoiled for choice when it came to romantic interests and Regulus was a decent catch. He wasn't quite as attractive as his brother, the intolerable bastard, but he had a beauty all his own with those grey eyes and that ever so gentle smile. He was clever, responsible and so accepting. And for some reason he simply adored Severus.

But he was still Black's brother, that alone made their relationship entirely impossible.

No, they can only be friends.

Speaking of friends, Severus couldn't help but scoff at the thought of exactly what Lily was up to right at that moment. What the majority of Hogwarts female student population was up to really.

They were hunting, for James Potter's heart.

Literally.

Apparently, Black – the utter toad – had taken it upon himself to finally bring an end to his best friend's unrequited and very public pining over one Lilian Evans by casting a spell on her that would reveal who she was attracted to. Hoping that the object of Lily's affections would be Potter and that revelation would then finally bring them together. Unfortunately, Black's aim was off and he ended up hitting his best friend with the spell instead. Which wouldn't have mattered since everyone knew of Potter's very obvious affections for the fiery redhead, unfortunately Black had been completely wrong about exactly what the spell would do when he cast it.

The absolute imbecile had managed to miss the fine print below the spell that he found in the Restricted section of the library; which explained that the affections of the one that had the spell cast on them would be revealed by having the heart of that person appear in the possession of the person that they had feelings for.

In other words, James Potter's literal bleeding beating heart would suddenly appear in Lily's

possessions as a way to reveal exactly who had his affections.

Severus had had to suppress the urge to laugh hysterically when he found out the news and settled for a cruel smirk directed at Potter who sat flushed in embarrassment on the other side of the Great Hall. The headmaster had made the announcement earlier during lunch. It was an emergency after all and they couldn't waste time treading lightly.

After the announcement had been made, Severus caught up with Lily and found out that Black had cast the spell that morning and upon realising exactly what had happened, the headmaster and McGonagall had immediately gone to search through Lily's belongings as a way to find the organ only to come up empty handed. This came as a shock to most of Gryffindor tower since they thought that she would definitely have it, but alas there was nothing there.

It was then decided that the announcement would be made and that the rooms and belongings of all students of Hogwarts would be searched in an attempt at finding James Potter's heart. Lily had to go back to Gryffindor tower to supervise the search happening there before helping the other prefects with the rest of the houses. She went to tell Severus that she wouldn't be able to meet up with him to study in the library that day.

Severus hadn't minded, again he was too busy restraining his amusement at the situation.

After everything that Potter and his brood have put him through, he was happy that the arrogant twat was finally getting his just deserts. It was satisfying to know that for once he would be on the receiving end of a patented Marauder mishap and couldn't do anything about it.

That being said Severus knew that it would only be a matter of time until the thing was found. With Potter having no shortage of admirers in the school, Severus was giving it two-three hours tops before someone found it and returned it to the Gryffindor chaser to boastfully claim that they had been the one's to receive James Potter's heart.

Pity, Severus would have enjoyed watching Potter squirm for a while longer.

Severus had just made it into the corridor that led to the dorms. It was quiet, peaceful. Not surprising since Lily had told him that they were saving Slytherin house for last. With Potters obvious dislike for the house of snakes, they didn't think that any girl in Slytherin would possibly be the one that had his affections. It would be Gryffindor first, then Ravenclaw, Hufflepuff and if they still haven't managed to find the thing then they'd move on to Slytherin. And if they still couldn't find it, Auror's would have to be called in.

The spell Black used had an edge of dark magic to it, headmaster Dumbledore was hoping to avoid calling them in, of course trying to protect his precious Gryffindors, but if they didn't find Potter's heart soon they'd be left with no choice. Apparently, the spell had a stasis aspect on it, that would disappear after three days if Potter's heart wasn't returned to him. So if they don't find his heart and get it back, Potter would be no more.

Severus almost smiled at that. He almost smiled at the prospect of no longer having to deal with James Potter or his hair brained friends ever again.

He thought about what it would be like if he found Potter's heart, not that he's quite dumb enough to think or want to have the organ gifted to him but... but if he found it, in a corridor somewhere or just abandoned in a corner. Oh the sweet revenge he could take but... then Severus' lips pulled into a slight frown.

He couldn't do that. He wouldn't do that.

Despite what Potter, his minions and most of the school thinks; Severus isn't evil. He'd never kill anyone, he isn't even sure if he'd have the stomach to try. It's one of the reasons he's been hesitating on Lucius' invitations, the one's he keeps getting from he-who-must-not-be-named. The reason why he never willingly accepted the many gifts.

The Dark Lord was interested in him, he had expressed his desire to have the young wizard in his following, he didn't even seem to care that Severus was a half-blood. And in a lot of ways Severus found it tempting. The Dark Lord was offering him power and knowledge, everything he could ever need; everything that's he's never had. He was being offered so much in exchange for what he considered to be so little but, Severus wasn't naïve. He knew that if he joined the Dark Lord, took the mark and became a Death Eater, he wouldn't just be brewing potions and casting spells; he'd have to hurt people. He'd have to kill people regardless of who they were and what they did. Innocent or guilty, muggleborn or pureblood, it wouldn't matter. Severus wasn't sure if he'd be able to truly harm anyone like that, he'd certainly never choose to do so and so he hesitated and hesitated.

Lucius' irritation at his constant stalling was getting more evident with every letter he sent and Severus knew that he wouldn't be able to avoid the decision much longer.

So no, if he found Potter's heart somewhere, he wouldn't try to kill the bastard, even though he deserved it. Maybe change its colour or something first; a nice Slytherin green before sending it back to its owner would be just the right touch.

Severus suppressed a snort.

He'd just reached his room and opened the door. After a long day of classes and some brief amusement over Potter's situation, Severus just wanted to collapse on his bed and lie there for a while. He could get up and go to the library to study in about an hour, go get dinner and then head back to the library to work on his Transfiguration essay. He'd picked a particularly difficult topic for his essay and needed to get started as soon as he could. While Severus certainly wasn't failing the subject, it was still his worst. He had slightly above average marks and was hoping to push it up to a definite above average-

The raven stopped just after he shut his door and looked over to the bed. He froze.

There was a box on the bed, a large pink box tied with a white silk ribbon; right there on his bed. Severus froze when he realised that it must be another gift from the Dark Lord. Severus never sent a letter in return after the last one and he knew that Lucius was losing his patience.

Severus took in a deep breath and walked to the bed, dropping his bag on the floor beside it as he readied himself. It'll probably be more dark books, potions ingredients, robes or some other artefact. Things that Severus would normally be thrilled to have but under the circumstances, he wished that he could just send it back. But it wouldn't be possible *under the circumstances*.

He really needs to make a decision.

Severus let out a sigh as he looked at the box. It was a little different from the usual soft embroidered wrappings of black, silver or green. The pink and white was more than just a little glaring in the silver and green surroundings of his room but, who is he to question the whims of the Dark Lord?

He has to at least see what it is. There wasn't a card, but that wasn't totally unusual so Severus thought nothing of it as he pulled at the end of the white ribbon and it very easily slipped off. Setting it aside, Severus lifted up the lid of the large pink box only to frown at what he saw inside.

He reached in and then...

He stopped breathing as his eyes went wide.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Meet me in the library in one hour

- *Snape*

That's what the letter he got almost two hours ago from one of the school owls said, and at first James had had no intention of going. But the search of Gryffindor Tower was turning out to be fruitless and James was having some serious difficulties not strangling Sirius in the meantime, so he figured that Snape would make for a good distraction. At least until dinner time.

They were silent as they walked down the hallway, ignoring the stares and whispers and giggles from some of the students that they passed. The situation was made even worse when James lifted a hand to his chest, over to the spot where his heart should have been only to feel nothing. There was no soft thumping behind the walls of flesh under his chest, though he could still feel the steady throb of a pulse on his neck. It was unsettling, slightly terrifying and infuriating.

James glanced back at Sirius who was walking beside Remus with Peter trailing behind them and tried not to glare. He was upset but he was trying not to be. Sirius' actions, while stupid, had been done with good intentions so he couldn't truly despise his friend for it.

He was just very very upset.

"Lily said that we'll start with Ravenclaw after dinner, finish in the morning and then start with Hufflepuff before moving on to Slytherin." Remus said and Peter frowned.

"But it wouldn't possibly be there would it?"

"Yeah, there's no way Prongs would fancy a slimy snake... right Prongs?"

James rolled his eyes at the hesitation in the other's tone, "Of course not. I have some standards Pads."

Remus seemed to let out a sigh, "Well if it isn't in Gryffindor then it must be in one of the other houses. James, are you sure you don't know who could have it?"

"Yes I'm sure."

"It's just... if Lily doesn't have it then I can't imagine who else it would be. I know you've dated a lot of the girls in the other houses but you never really talked about any of them after. Just Lily."

"Maybe it's just someone he hasn't thought about in a while. The book could've been wrong." Sirius reasoned and Remus shook his head. "Dumbledore would've known if it was."

"Maybe James has feelings for someone but doesn't know it." Peter piped up and James scoffed.

“And exactly how would I not know it Wormtail?”

“Maybe it’s like Sirius said and its someone you haven’t thought about in a while. Or maybe it’s someone you don’t like.”

“How does that make sense?” Sirius asked incredulously and all three marauders looked back at the other. Peter flushed, looking down at the floor with a shrug.

“One time my mum said... she said, hate is not the opposite of love. The opposite of love is indifference.”

“What?”

Remus’ lips pursed together, “That makes sense. When you love someone, you think about them all the time right, you care about them and what they’re doing what they like and what they don’t like. So the opposite of that would be not giving a toss about them in any way, not caring or having any interest in anything they think or do.”

“So?” Sirius asked and Remus continued, “So when you hate someone its basically the same as when you love someone isn’t it? You think about them a lot, you care about the things they do and why they do them, who they’re doing it with. You pay attention to the things they do. You care about what they think otherwise you wouldn’t be thinking about them at all.”

Sirius’ frown deepened, “So?”

“So, its possible that maybe there’s someone James likes, maybe even loves, but he doesn’t realise it because he thinks he hates them.”

The Animagus paused in thought, “Someone he thinks about, someone he pays attention to but thinks he hates them?” then Sirius scoffed, “No way, I don’t think so. By that logic wouldn’t that mean that he’s in love with Snivellus?”

Suddenly James tensed in front of them, but none of them noticed as he just kept moving as normal as Sirius continued. “Don’t be stupid Wormtail. You need to stop listening to your mum’s weird stories.”

Peter started to pout while Remus shrugged, “I don’t think it’s just a weird story. Well... I don’t think that James would have feelings for Snape, but it could be someone else. Right James?”

“Y-Yeah, right.”

“Hopefully we’ll find out who soon.” Remus said just as they reached the library. The werewolf frowned.

“I still don’t understand why you’re actually going to meet him.”

“I agree, what if it’s a trap?” Peter said nervously and Sirius shrugged.

“We can handle anything Snivellus tries to throw at us. Besides, this could be the perfect opportunity to blow of some steam.” Sirius said with a smirk already slipping his wand from his pocket and Remus shook his head.

“If he wanted to trap us, he wouldn’t ask to meet in the library. Pinch would have a fit if anything happened in there.” the werewolf sighed, “Still, I don’t think this is a good idea.”

“C’mon Moony, how often does Snivellus actually try and make contact?” James said with a smirk, “Besides, it’s been days since the last prank and Padfoot’s right, putting Snivellus in his place is just the right thing to pick me up right now.”

Remus shook his head with a frown but still followed as James opened the doors to the library and stepped inside.

They walked by Madam Pinch’s desk, the older woman giving them a dark glare as they went passed. Just daring them to try anything, so they could be severely punished. But they wouldn’t do anything. Prior experiences having proven to them that even James’ charms had no effect on the woman when the safety of her books was at stake. They’ll be on their best behaviour... for the most part, or at least until Snape starts something first.

Speaking of Snape... the Marauders turned the corner around the shelf and headed way to the back of the library. At one of the furthest desks near the back sat Snape, lazily reading through some book. They noticed that there weren’t any other students around that side. Perfect. That means less witnesses so they won’t get into trouble.

Remus’ lips pursed in disapproval but he still said nothing as he and Peter followed James and Sirius. Sirius who had already started glaring at the Slytherin and James who was wearing a smirk.

To their total and utter surprise though, when the Slytherin noticed them approach he didn’t do more than glance up at them for a brief moment before reaching back to take something from the chair beside him. The marauders all collectively tensed only to frown when the Slytherin put a silver platter on the table with a silver dome food cover over it and then looked down at his book again.

“You’re late.” Snape drawled and James scoffed.

“Aw, did I keep you waiting Snivellus, did you miss me?”

“Not at all, I was just about to head to dinner. I was almost disappointed when I thought that you wouldn’t show.” Snape said, not looking up as he flipped the page on his book. The marauders frowned. “I’m also a little surprised that you actually did show up.”

“Call it curiosity, its not often that a slimy coward like you slithers out of the pit they live in. What’s the occasion Snape, are you looking for punishment is that what it is? No one wants to be around greasy bat like you so you’ve decided to come looking for my attentions.”

To the marauders surprise, Snape didn’t glare or get upset. He just looked up and a smirk started tugging at his lips.

“Me, look for *your* attentions?” Snape scoffed, “Not on your life Potter.”

“Then what do you want Snivellus?”

Snape’s smirk grew even more, “I’m just wondering how you’re doing. Are you doing well Potter? Everything *ticking* away the way it’s supposed to?”

James frowned, Sirius stared in confusion. The marauders were all thrown for a loop.

“What?”

“I’m enquiring about your health, your state of mind, your general well-being.” Snape said shutting his book and crossing one leg over the other, “After all the whole school knows about your

unfortunate situation thanks to your mongrel of a friend, I thought it prudent to ask.”

“You smarmy bastard.” Sirius hissed, “If you’re just trying to mock us then-“

“Then what? What are you going to do Black? Please tell me because I am dying to know.”
Snape’s tone dripped with cruel amusement, “Hex me, curse me, set your pet werewolf after me again?”

Remus tensed and Sirius glared hard, James immediately took out his wand and aimed it at Snape’s face.

“Why use a werewolf when I could just end your miserable little existence right now?”

To their surprise, Snape didn’t even flinch, “Oh but Potter, why would you ever want to do that?”

Sirius took out his wand as well, “Because you’d deserve it you disgusting half-breed excuse for a human being.”

Snape’s wand was out as well, though he didn’t have it aimed at the Marauders, to their confusion it was in his right hand aimed at the platter and dome on the table, “Now now Black, that’s not a nice thing to say in front of Lupin now is it?”

“Bastard! I’ll-“

“You’ll what? Tell me Potter,” Snape spat as he reached out with his left hand onto the table and grabbed the handle on the silver dome to lift it up off the platter and set it aside. Four pairs of eyes snapped over to the platter and the marauders all froze.

“Oh Merlin.” Remus gasped as they stared, wide eyed at the platter. Because right there in the middle of the silver plate was a human heart thumping softly against its metal and vibrating ever so slightly. Contracting and then releasing, they could almost see the blood moving steady through the organ.

Thudump... thudump.

“What are you going to do?”

James swallowed hard and suddenly the heart started thumping faster. He lowered his wand.

Thudump-thudump-thudump.

“Where did you get that?” James asked quietly. Snape’s smirk seemed to grow even more, not quite turning into a smile but not being any less amused.

“I found it in a box, in my room, on my bed; wrapped in just the loveliest pure white bow.” He explained, shifting in his seat seeming to get more comfortable but not letting his wand drop from where it was aimed at the thumping heart.

“How-how the hell did you...” Sirius growled, “You must have taken it from somewhere!”

Snape shook his head, “Really Black I found it in my room, I have absolutely no idea where it could have come from. After hearing about Potter’s predicament, I thought it best to contact you and ask if you could tell me how it got on my bed.” The heart was still thumping hard and fast, dark onyx eyes flickered over towards it before going up to lock onto the hazel eyed wizard, “Nervous, Potter?”

James swallowed hard as he forced himself to look away from the organ and to the Slytherin, "I don't know what you're talking about."

"You don't?" Snape arched a brow before giving a slight shrug, "Well, if this isn't yours then you won't care if I destroy it. I think an incendio ought to do the trick."

He lifted his wand, turning to the organ and James' eyes went wide.

"STOP!"

Snape did stop and then looked at the Gryffindor, leaning back in his seat with his wand still aimed at the heart, which was now beating faster than ever.

"Is there a problem, Potter?"

"Snape!" Remus suddenly said as he stepped forward, "You have to know that that's James' heart."

"Of course I do Lupin, I'm not an idiot. I'm just waiting for Potter to admit it." Snape said smugly and Sirius growled.

"Bastard."

"Tsk, tsk. Such foul language, Black. But this really doesn't have anything to do with you so I'd prefer it if you kept your muzzle shut." Sirius glared hard, wishing that he could just curse the Slytherin into oblivion but with him so close to James' heart and holding a wand... The Animagus let out a growl as he lowered his wand and stepped back.

Snape let out a soft scoff before looking up at James, "Well Potter, who does it belong to?"

James' jaw clenched, "Its mine."

"And pray tell, how did it end up in my room? I know I didn't put it there, I don't suppose you have any theories?"

It was tense and quiet for ten whole seconds.

"No answer?"

Silence, Remus looked up at James in concern, his face had flushed red and Sirius frowned as well while Peter just quietly watched the scene.

Snape arched a brow before he scoffed and reached for his bag, "As much as I'd love to continue this sparkling conversation, I'm afraid its almost dinner time and I'm absolutely famished."

"You... you're leaving? What-what about the heart?" Peter said, making those the first words out of his mouth since they entered the library. Snape stood up, the marauders all instinctively flinched.

He scoffed, his hand fell to the side though the wand was still clutched in it. "As much as I'd enjoy watching Potter's slow demise, I'd rather not have the arrogant troll's death hanging over my head. I have no intention of keeping it or anything of the sort." Then he looked at James and hissed, "One request Potter; keep your disgusting organs to yourself."

Snape then slung his bag over his shoulder and walked around the marauders, determinedly making his way out of the library. Not looking back once though he kept his wand in his hand.

Peter watched him go, Sirius glared after him, Remus let out a sigh.

“Thank Merlin that’s over. For a minute I almost thought he’d actually hex it.”

“Slimy bastard, where does he get off-“

“Sirius, stop it. It’s over now and James has his heart back, isn’t that all that matters? Right James?” Remus then looked over to the raven only to frown when he found James standing absolutely still, hands clenched at his sides as he stared down hard at the organ on the table which was still racing.

“James?”

“You alright mate?” Sirius asked as he stepped up to the other only to stop when he saw that flush on the other’s face, the way he bit his lip hard as he kept glaring at the organ.

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After dinner, Dumbledore announced that the crisis was over and that James’ heart had been found and safely returned without incident, though he didn’t say where it was found or by who. To the disappointment of many of Potter’s followers, who had been hoping to find it themselves.

After dinner, Severus found himself in a good mood and opted to procrastinate on his Transfiguration essay for just a bit. He went back to the common room, even let Regulus persuade him to stay up for a game of chess before he finally retired to his room for the night.

Tomorrow he’d have classes and then he’d meet with Lily to study and just spend some time together. Hopefully after the disaster of the day, the Marauders would stay away for a while. If not, Severus decided that the threat of the school discovering exactly where Potter’s heart had been found would be enough to at least keep them in line for a bit. Either way, he had good expectations for the day ahead and went to sleep with the slightest slither of a smile of his face.

The next day, Severus would receive a reminder that nothing in his life ever went that easy.

His alarm clock went off and Severus tiredly reached for his wand to turn the thing off. He sat up on the bed, letting out a wide yawn as he thought about what classes he had and which books to put in his bag only to almost jump right out of his skin when he saw the thing at the end of his bed.

“No...”

It was a bright pink box with a white silk bow. Severus’ lips twisted in confusion, his brows furrowed for a brief moment and he crawled over the bed to pull the bow off and toss the lid aside. Inside was a silver dome and platter, Severus reached in to lift the dome and-

“What in Salazar’s name-“

There was James Potter’s heart.

Again.

Severus just stared at the fleshy organ as it thumped and thumped in a steady rhythm wondering what on earth was going on before he returned the dome and shoved the lid back on the box.

It was early, usually Severus liked to get up early so he could take his time getting ready for the day but it would seem that he has an extra errand to run. The Slytherin growled as he jumped up from his bed and quickly showered and changed before grabbing the box. He paused before leaving the room, deciding to transfigure a light black sheet and threw it over the box to keep it hidden before he quickly made his way out of the dungeons. Through the quiet hallways, which were mostly vacant, he took the unfamiliar path up to Gryffindor tower and stopped outside the portrait of the fat lady guarding it.

Right.

He left his room so pissed off he didn't even stop to think about this part.

Fortunately he didn't have to think too long.

“Snape?”

Severus looked back and found Lupin walking up to the door with a frown on his face.

“I was just doing my morning rounds for...” The werewolf stopped, “What’re you doing-“

Severus shoved the box right into Lupin's chest and the werewolf was too surprised to do anything more than just take it.

“I'll say this one last time. Tell your idiot friend to keep his organs to himself!” he hissed before turning around and storming away, back to the dungeons. Lupin just stared at him in confusion before he lifted up the sheet and saw the pink box. With a frown the werewolf let his head rest against the box and listened before his eyes went wide.

Severus tried to just move on and put the unpleasantness of that morning behind him. He got back to his room and finished his daily preparations before heading out for breakfast. He ran into Rosier on the way out and the other teen immediately started buttering him up, trying to convince the raven to partner up with him for potions for their next practical the next day. Severus did his best to skate around the question. He usually partnered up with Lily for potions, it was one of the few classes they shared and he didn't want to miss the opportunity. But he couldn't say that.

Most of the students in Slytherin house still didn't approve of his relationship with Lily and he just wasn't up for hearing any pureblood supremacy talk right in that moment. Rosier was usually better about it, he didn't seem to care that Severus and Lily were friends, he just didn't like being told no.

They got to the Great Hall for breakfast. Severus couldn't help but let his eyes drift over to the Gryffindor table for a brief moment. He was minutely surprised that the Marauders weren't there but he didn't let himself think about it for too long.

After breakfast he went through the usual routine of classes, then lunch and classes again. After lessons he and Lily studied for a while before they went their separate ways for dinner. He went back to the library and finally got started on his Transfiguration essay, he got a good start and then went back to the dorms for the night.

He ran into Regulus, who asked for his help with his charms essay. Spent about twenty minutes on that before finally going to bed. He hadn't had to deal with the Marauders for the day.

The next morning his alarm woke him, he got up and found a pink box with a white silk bow at the end of his bed...

Again.

Severus had glared hard at the brightly coloured box and got out of bed. Not even bothering to open it this time as he got showered and changed.

Like the day before he transfigured a black sheet to cover the box and then left the dungeons. He made his way up to Gryffindor Tower again and waited. This time Lupin didn't come up behind him. No this time he was just leaving the common room when he saw Snape and blinked in surprise all over again.

"Snape, what-" His eyes snapped down to the box shaped sheet in the Slytherin's hands and he sighed. "It happened again."

"Lupin, if I find this stupid thing in my room again, next time I swear to Salazar I'll incinerate it." Severus hissed as he shoved the box into the werewolf's arms again before turning to leave when-

"Snape wait! I..." The werewolf took a deep breath, "Come in."

"Excuse me?" He said staring at the werewolf incredulously and Lupin rolled his eyes.

"I said come in."

"Absolutely not-"

"Do you want this to stop happening?" He asked and Severus just stared back at him, Lupin moved back through the portrait hole, "Then come in and you'll find out how."

Severus paused, staring at the werewolf in disbelief and Lupin spoke again. "It's either that or this will keep happening and I'd rather you didn't incinerate James' heart. Come on."

One deep breath, Severus silently asked himself what the hell he was doing before he let it back out and followed the werewolf through the portrait hole and into the common room.

He took a moment to look around himself once they were inside. It was just red and gold as far as the eye could see and this cloyingly sweet scent of pumpkin juice just seemed to radiate throughout the room. Snape's nose wrinkled in distaste and he glared.

"This way."

Lupin said and Severus followed him through the common room and up to what he realised was the boy's dorms. Up the stairs through the corridor and then they stopped at one of the rooms furthest down the hall. Lupin paused to balance the box on one hand so he could open the door with the other. The first voice he heard belonged to Black.

"Moony, back so soon-" silence and then a groan, "Oh for fuck's sakes it happened again?!"

"We have a guest." Remus said and Severus took that as his cue to enter, despite every instinct in his body telling him to get as far away from there as humanly possible.

There were four fourposter beds decked out in red and gold, arranged around the room. Everything from the carpets to the curtains just screamed Gryffindor. Black was sitting on his bed, seeming to have just gotten up. Pettigrew was right in the middle of making his bed and Potter had just gotten out of the bathroom, there was a towel around his waist and another on his head.

He heard two gasps and then-

“SNIVELLUS?! WHAT THE HELL-“

“It happened again.” Lupin said shutting the door behind Snape who stayed right beside it with his arms folded over his chest. Potter paled at the sight of him, the towel he’d been using for his hair dropped to the floor. “We can’t keep going like this. James you have to tell him.”

Potter looked over to the werewolf, “What?”

“Tell him.” He said putting the box on the bed and removing the sheet to reveal the bright pink box with the white bow.

Peter’s eyes went wide, Black growled in annoyance and Potter just stared at the Slytherin in silence.

“Tell him what?”

Lupin took in a deep breath and then turned to face the Slytherin who was still standing by the door.

“James likes you. That’s why his heart keeps showing up in your room.”

“Moony!” Black hissed as he got up from his bed and Lupin just glared at his friend, before returning his gaze to the Slytherin.

“But you’ve already figured that out, haven’t you? You just refuse to believe it.”

Severus didn’t answer and Potter’s eyes snapped up to the Slytherin and he frowned.

As the room remained silent Lupin let out another sigh, “There’s a way to break the spell, but James has been trying to avoid it so we’ve been trying to do other things but clearly nothing is working-“

“Moony-“

Lupin cut Black off, “I’m not going to tell you how the spell is broken its not my place. Sirius, Peter and I will leave the room and James will tell you himself. What you choose to do is up to you.”

“No way! We are not leaving this greasy bat here with-“

“Do you have any better ideas?” Lupin hissed and Black paused before his jaw snapped shut and he growled. Peter who had been watching the whole time let out a sigh as he quickly grabbed his robe at the end of the bed.

“He’s right, Padfoot. There’s no other way.”

“But-“ Black’s head snapped from one friend to the other eyes filling with betrayal before he finally growled out, “Fine.” He said grabbing his own robe and pulling it on. “But if he tries anything-“

“Now, Sirius.”

Lupin walked up to the door and opened it, Peter quickly scurried out avoiding Snape’s gaze as much as he could while Black glared right at him as he stomped his way out. Lupin paused to look back at Potter.

“Tell him.”

The door shut behind the werewolf and the room dropped into silence again. Severus and Potter just stared at each other with the Slytherin feeling distinctly uncomfortable and seriously contemplating the option of just leaving but he forced himself to stay put.

“How do you break the spell?” He asked impatiently and Potter seemed to blink when the Slytherin spoke. Severus growled in annoyance. “Well Potter? I don’t have all day and I’d rather not be in your presence longer than I absolutely have to.”

Potter frowned at him, “You’re a prat you know that?”

“Excuse me?”

“You’re a miserable prat and I can’t stand you.”

Severus’ jaw clenched, “According to your friend, that’s not true now is it?”

“No, its true. You’re a miserable prat and you’re rude and weird and,” Potter stepped forward and Severus instinctively stepped back against the wall, “And you’re just awful, but I still want you so badly I can’t stand it.”

Severus blinked, “What?”

“You’re stupid too. I mean you’re smart but it’s like no matter what I do I just... I can’t get through to you.”

“Potter what are you babbling about?”

“You know exactly what I’m *babbling* about.” He said clearly, “Remus was right wasn’t he? You figured out that I like you, you just refuse to accept it.”

“Oh yes, I should accept that the same person that’s been bullying me for years has somehow managed to develop romantic feelings for me. Because that makes perfect sense.” Severus sneered and Potter paused before looking back at the box on his bed and then he looked up at the Slytherin.

“You want to know how to break the spell?”

Severus said nothing.

“Yes or no, Snape?”

“Fine. Anything to end the madness.” Severus grit out and Potter lifted his head and took in a deep breath.

“Sex.”

Severus almost gaped, “Pardon me?”

“You have to have sex with me. You can’t just give me back my heart, it requires a physical representation of a romantic bond in order to break the spell.” Potter explained and this time Severus did gape.

“Absolutely not.”

“If you don’t, the spell won’t break.” Potter said walking right up to the other and Severus was

stuck since the wall didn't really allow him much space to go. So he just stood his ground. "There is no other way."

"I could always just destroy it, that would take care of two problems for me at once." Severus said and Potter's eyes narrowed down before he spoke.

"You won't kill me. You're not evil."

"According to you I am."

"I didn't mean it, but you're always with-" Potter took in a deep breath and shut his eyes before looking back at the bed, "We'll do it right now. Do it once and it'll be over, you'll never have to talk to me again."

"Go to hell." Severus said as he turned and reached for the door to leave only to stop when Potter put his hand on the door to keep it shut and put the other on the other side of Snape's head. The Gryffindor was right in front of him, mere inches away as he spoke. Standing that close, Severus became acutely aware of the fact that Potter wasn't wearing any clothes, he could just barely feel the heat almost radiate off of his body.

"It's been three days Snape. We've been trying to put my heart back but it hasn't worked. If its not back before midnight tonight, I'll die. Are you really willing to let that happen?" Potter said looking right into the Slytherin's eyes as he spoke. "I don't think you're actually evil. I don't think you'd ever really hurt anyone. But you can prove me wrong right now."

"Bastard. That's not fair." Severus said and Potter seemed to lean in a bit more.

"My life's in your hands Severus. You choose what to do next." And then he closed the distance between them, locking their lips in a kiss and causing the Slytherin to tense tremendously before he broke it a few seconds later. Severus glared at him hard.

"I despise you, Potter."

"James." Potter breathed as he wrapped his arms around the raven to draw him close, "You only call me James." And then he kissed Severus again, dragging him over towards the bed and Severus let him.

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He's not sure exactly how long they were up there for, he guessed that it couldn't have been too long. He hoped that it wasn't too long. He hoped that he wasn't in there long enough to miss any of his classes. Severus just wanted to get back to his room, shower and then move on with his life like nothing happened.

It was just as he was doing the buttons of his shirt when an arm wrapped around his shoulders from behind. He tensed, resisting the urge to look over to the mop of pitch-black chaos he could feel on his shoulder brushing up against his neck right at that moment.

"Potter, let me go."

He heard a humourless laugh, "Merlin, we're back to that again."

"Potter-"

"James. My name is James and yours is Severus and I'm tired of pretending like I don't know

that.”

Severus let out a sigh, suddenly feeling exhausted as he let his hands drop to his lap. Almost six years. Almost six years of this moron tormenting him and then he throws that love crap at him, Severus is forced to either shag this idiot or let him die, they have sex and now-

Severus is so tired.

“James.” He said and the arms around him tightened ever so slightly. “I need to go to class.”

“I didn’t figure it out until you found my heart. Before that Peter said-” James said before letting out a scoff, “You’re the first thing I think about when I wake up and the last thing I think of when I go to sleep. The only thing I want to talk about.”

“I don’t like you.”

“I know, I know and I’m sorry about all of this. I’ve been a bastard to you for years, I’m not sure how you could like me at this point.” James then let go and moved down to sit by the raven at the edge. He looked over to Severus who was still staring straight ahead. James let out a sigh, “I screwed up. I’ve been screwing up since the moment that I met you and I don’t think anything I do could fix it. But, I don’t think I’ll be able to stay away from you either.”

Severus did look up at him then, “Why?”

“I couldn’t leave you alone when I thought I hated you, why would I stay away now that I know I love you?”

It was clear from his tone that that was supposed to be a joke, something to break the tension. But the tension didn’t break and James couldn’t look at the Slytherin when he said it.

“You’re in love with me?” Severus asked, his tone empty as he looked at the Gryffindor and James swallowed hard and he finally looked dark onyx with hazel brown.

“You got my heart, didn’t you? And I meant what I said, you’re an absolute prat sometimes but, I still can’t get enough of you.”

“You’re insane.” Severus finished buttoning up his shirt and grabbed his trousers to finish getting dressed.

“I’ve seen the gifts, from Malfoy.”

Severus stopped right in his tracks and turned sharply to look at the other, “How do you-“

James reached over the side of the bed and took out a shimmering bundle of cloth, setting it down on the bed, “Invisibility cloak. I followed you into your room three months ago. I managed to convince myself that I was trying to prank you but really, I think I just wanted to see what you were like when no one else is around. That’s when I saw them, in your chest and under your bed.”

“You had no right.” Severus glared, James just matched his gaze.

“When does he want you to take the mark? Next year or after graduation?” Severus said nothing and James sighed.

“I’m not surprised, you’re really brilliant. It’s not hard seeing why they’d want you there. You don’t have to take the mark if you don’t want it, there’s so many other things you could do, I’m

sure of it.”

Severus just looked away and started collecting the rest of his things. “Because you know so much about me.”

“If you need help-“

“I don’t want anything from you.”

“Of course not. You don’t have to take anything from me I just-” James cut himself off dragging a hand through his hair, “You’re not like them. You’re different. You’ve always been different and it drives me crazy but you’re better than them. I hate the thought that you might let them make you like they are.”

“No one is making me do anything, oh, except for you and that mutt of a friend of course.” Severus snapped glaring hard as he pulled his jumped over his head and snatched up his tie and robes. “I should’ve let you die-“

“But you didn’t and I’m grateful. Under the circumstances anyone else would’ve let me die. You saved me, I’ll always be in your debt.”

Severus turned to look at him, “What about the incident with Lupin? According to Dumbledore I owe you for that.”

“You ruined it. I was going to use a life debt as an excuse to stay around you but, I guess it evens out.” James smiled a bit before shaking his head, “I still hate that he said that. I didn’t help you so you’d owe me, I didn’t even know what I was doing. When I found out about what Padfoot did I just reacted. Moony could’ve killed you and-”

“Your friends would have been executed or sent to Azkaban.”

“And you would’ve been gone too. I think it would’ve driven me crazy if you were gone. I didn’t even talk to Padfoot for a month after it happened-“

“As touching as this all is, I’m leaving.”

“You know, you can ignore me as much as you like but that’s not going to change how I feel.”

Severus stopped, “Well, then nothing will have changed between us.”

The Slytherin left the room away from the dorms and out the portrait hole. Severus ignored Lupin when he called out to him. ignored the students that glanced at him as he made his way to the dungeons into the common room and up to his bedroom, he shut the door behind him and sat down on the bed, took in deep breaths when-

“Morning Sev! I just-“ Regulus stopped when he saw the raven on the bed. His clothes looked dishevelled with his robes on the bed and his tie in his hand, Severus’ hair was a mess and there seemed to be marks on his neck.

“Sev?”

“I’m busy Regulus.” Severus said shortly as he got up to start righting his clothes. Regulus’ lips pursed before he shut the door behind him and stepped forward.

“Something happened. What is it?”

“Nothing.”

“Was it that Evans girl?”

“No.”

“Was it Sirius again?”

At that Severus suddenly laughed, a startlingly loud sound that had Regulus sighing. “Circe, what did he do now?”

Severus shook his head, sat back down on the bed his face flushed as he gave a brief sniff, “Oh what does the mutt usually do besides ruin everything?”

Regulus walked over and sat on the bed, “What did he do?”

Severus opened his mouth to speak, but no words came out. He tried again and again.

“Severus?”

Suddenly tears were falling, slowly and silently rolling down his cheeks and Regulus blinked before he quickly reached out to wrap his arms around the other. Brushing Severus’ hair from his face as he tried to get the other to look at him.

“Severus?! Please, tell me what’s wrong.”

“I-“ His voice cracked and his face twisted in confusion. “I don’t know.”

~ END FLASH BACK ~

James let a small smile spread over his lips as he stood in front of the mirror in the bathroom that morning.

He’s getting married tomorrow.

And it’s...

It’s going to be a good day.

Lily is at her parent’s house to get ready. He hasn’t seen her since last week and truthfully he was grateful. He needed time to fully absorb this decision that he’s made and he had the distinct feeling that if he sees her too soon before the wedding he might not-

The smile fell from James’ lips and he shut his eyes to take a deep breath.

No, this is good. This a good thing. It’s great even. He’s doing the right thing. He needs to move on, he can’t keep holding onto Severus anymore.

A deep sigh.

Merlin.

What he wouldn’t do for a drink right about now. But after what happened two years ago, James

hasn't gotten up the nerve to touch alcohol in ages.

"I despise alcohol, do not drink in my presence."

After Severus left; he went and drank down a whole bottle of whiskey out of spite, only to regret it immensely the very next morning. It wasn't till about a year ago that he stopped altogether.

He and Lily had started dating, they were out for dinner, the waiter had just poured their wine and somehow James managed to coax her into talking about her ex-best friend and the reason for his aversion to alcohol. She asked him how he knew about that. He lied and said he heard some Slytherin in school bring it up once.

"Sev-Snape's father was..." She sighed and shook her head, "He drank a lot and when he drank like that he was a monster, well more than usual... He never said so but I could tell that he and his mother suffered a lot because of his dad. That's why he hates it, can't even stand the smell let alone the taste."

James couldn't even manage to finish his glass of wine after that.

The thought came in and stuck in his mind.

Maybe that's why Severus pushed him away that night.

The person that tormented him at school suddenly smelling like the one that tormented him at home. James is surprised he managed to even get that close. Sirius could never understand why James would refuse every drink that was offered to him when they went out and he'd whine about it for hours on end. Remus was a bit more understanding about it and Peter didn't seem too bothered either. Well, Peter was usually preoccupied with other things so it didn't really seem to matter.

A lot of things don't really seem to matter anymore and honestly at this point James is just trying to move on with his life. So maybe marrying Lily Evans wasn't the right way to go about it... scratch that it's a terrible way to go about it.

At first it seemed so simple, so logical. After all, after running into Lily in Diagon Alley, asking the girl out and then actually taking her out after she surprisingly agreed; it didn't seem odd at all. Lily was still beautiful and smart and she still had that wicked tongue. Though her resistance to James seemed to have softened a bit since their days at Hogwarts.

They went out again and again, at first everything seemed fine. Nothing seemed out of the ordinary and James was honestly proud of himself for managing to leave all of that unpleasantness of the past behind and finally moving on with his life.

"Since when are you so interested in Snape's life?"

James blinked.

They were at another restaurant. Lily was frowning at him from across the table over the enchanted lamps lit up in the centre, making those green eyes glow oddly as they narrowed down at him while her desert sat on her plate half eaten.

"What do you mean?"

"This is our fifth date and..." She shook her head, "Probably the hundredth time you've asked me something about him. You ask about him more than you do about me."

James scoffed, “Don’t be silly, why would I care about Snivellus?”

Her eyes seemed to fill with annoyance at that old hated nickname, “Really? What are my parents names?”

“Your parents.”

“Yes, my Mum and Dad... and my sister as well.”

James frowned.

Eileen and Tobias right – no that’s Snape’s parents. Well he definitely remembers the sister-

“I thought you didn’t like talking about Petunia.” He said cutting off a piece of treacle tart with his fork and bringing it to his mouth. Lily frowned, but that seemed to appease her and she didn’t try to force the names of her parents out of him.

It’s definitely not Eileen and Tobias.

“I don’t, but I’m not exactly thrilled about talking about Snape either. I told you what happened between us.”

Yes she did.

James had asked her if she was still in contact with Severus. Proposing that it might be a good time to meet with the raven and apologise for all that school yard rivalry. To his disappointment, they weren’t talking anymore. Apparently they hadn’t spoken since Sixth when he found out that she was on slightly more friendlier terms with the marauders and more specifically James.

It was a big row, with Lily admitting that she found James attractive and Severus seeming to take immediate offense to that.

It seemed odd. After their relationship managed to survive the incident at the lake, James was sure that there was nothing that could possibly split the two friends up. Then again, he shouldn’t have been surprised that he was the reason Snape became so angry. From what Lily explained, the fight happened about a week after he and Severus... after he broke the spell.

He must’ve hated James so much around that time. Of course he wouldn’t be happy about them getting along.

“He was a big part of your life. I thought that I’d learn about him anyway so, why not get the details about the snarky prat out of the way first.”

Lily rolled her eyes, “Look we might not be on friendly terms but I don’t appreciate you talking about him like that either. Either call him by his name or don’t mention him at all.”

“So its Sev then?”

Lily scoffed, “He’d kill you for that.”

“Yeah, he would, wouldn’t he?” James said, his tone slipping into something soft and affectionate before he quickly shook his head and tried for a smile, “Wait what were we talking about again?”

Lily let her head rest on the palm of her hand, “We were talking about first kisses and you asked me who Snape’s was.”

James gave a sheepish grin, "Right."

"He'd kill *me* if I told you."

"That embarrassing?"

"Honestly? He could've done much worse." Lily explained before letting out a sigh, "I might not care for Rosier but even I can admit that he was incredibly attractive."

"Rosier?" James asked incredulously, "Evan Rosier that absolute loon--"

During auror training they'd started shadowing older aurors, learning from the best if you will. It was during a briefing on recent Death Eater activity that Rosier's name was brought up on the list of individuals who were suspected but unconfirmed as followers of He-who-must-not-be-named.

James had been more than just a little relieved that Severus' name hadn't been on that list.

"I don't know the details, just that it happened and that nothing was really different between them after."

James looked down at his tart for a moment, "Did Snape like him?"

"As a friend? The only person I even know of that showed he was interested in Sev-Snape that way was Regulus."

James dropped his fork, "No."

Lily gave a snort, "If you had paid closer attention you would have noticed just how lovestruck he looked anytime Snape even glanced in his direction. I'm not surprised that they've started living together."

"They're living together?" James couldn't keep the shock out of his voice, Lily noticed and frowned.

"James Potter I can already see the thoughts going through your mind right now and if you even think about telling Sirius about this, I will end you."

Somehow James seriously doubts Lily really knows what's going through his mind right at that moment.

"I just, since when? And how did you know, I thought you weren't talking anymore?"

She sighed, "We aren't. The bookstore where I work? They carry some speciality books, things like translations on ancient potions from Egypt, Greece and some countries in Asia. We got an order for some of those books in Severus' name from a referral from another store. The address he listed was 12 Grimmauld Place. And since we both know that Sirius doesn't live there anymore--"

"He lives with Regulus now."

James was speechless, Lily shook her head.

"Don't tell Sirius, we might not be friends anymore but I don't want to start up any ridiculous drama."

"Of-of course."

He totally told Sirius.

“Oh. Wait who told you?!”

Unfortunately Sirius already knew.

“Lily said – You knew?!”

James asked his tone filled with betrayal and Sirius let out a sigh as he made his way from one end of the apartment that he’d recently started renting to the other, heading straight for the kitchen to get a drink from the fridge.

“Maybe.”

“Maybe?” James asked incredulously as he followed and Sirius let out an even heavier sigh as he shut the door of the fridge, holding a muggle beer.

“Do you want one?”

“No.”

“This is the reason why I didn’t tell you.”

“What?”

Sirius twisted the cap off and took a slug before he spoke. “You gave up alcohol for him James. Years after he already rejected you once. You sponsor his potions thing. He rejects you again and you give up alcohol for him, even though we both know that Snape probably gives a toss about whether or not you’re drinking.”

“What does that-“

“You’re not over him.” Sirius said plainly, “Look, I’m about as happy about my brother shacking up with that prat as you are. But Reg’s taken charge of the estate; the house, all of the vaults except for mine since my mother wasn’t able to take that much away from me. I can’t stop him from keeping Snape there if he wants him there. If I told you, you’d get sulky and depressing like you did in Sixth or after the funeral and there’s literally nothing any of us could do about it. And Moony said-“

“Wait, Remus knows about this too?!”

“Yes he bloody knows, of course he knows. Making sure you don’t freak out because of Snape has apparently turned into a full-time job!” Sirius huffed, taking another swig of beer, “You’re not over him, you’re still in love with him somehow after all this time. When you found out about his father you gave up alcohol and spent months tracking him down to make sure he was actually dead. *We need to make sure there aren’t any dangerous muggles that could go blabbing about magic, Moody my fucking-arse!*”

James flushed a bit, “I-“

“Look, I don’t want you going over there and trying anything with Snape, alright! Not with Regulus there and not while you’re still so enamoured by him.”

“Oh what, you think I’ll touch your little brother?”

“Yes! I believe there are a lot of things you’ll do if you think it’ll get you even an inch closer to

Snape! You're dating Evans right now because of him."

"No I'm not--"

"Yeah? What are her parent's names James?"

"I--" Damn it, "Eileen and Tobias?"

"It's Margret and Richard, you stupid obsessive bastard. I have zero interest in her and even I remember that!" Sirius said stepping closer to James and pointing an accusatory finger at his chest, "But I knew you wouldn't remember because right after she said it, you kept asking about Snape's parents. If he had siblings, why her sister Petunia hated him so much."

"I--"

"Don't bother lying Prongs, we both know I'm right." Sirius said as he walked right by James and back into the living room and James stayed in the kitchen for a moment before he followed after him. He found Sirius in an arm chair in front of the enchanted fire so he walked over to sit down in the vacant chair beside him.

"How long have they been together?"

Sirius looked up at him and sighed, "Does it matter James?"

"Sirius."

Sirius shook his head, "I don't know, Reg didn't tell me that. I just know he's been living there since he started his potions mastery."

"So it's been a year at least."

"James, you know I'm sorry about what happened back in school and even though I can't stand that big nosed git if I could make things right and get you two together I would. But that doesn't look like its ever going to happen." Sirius turned in his seat to look at him, "You know, when I found out you and Evans were dating I was happy because I thought you were finally over him, but then you bring her over and the whole time while she was here, all you seemed to talk about was Snape."

"I'm serious about Lily." James tried and Sirius gave him a very dry look.

"What's her favourite colour James?"

James swallowed hard and Sirius shook his head as he took another sip from his bottle.

"What's Snape's favourite colour?" James said nothing looking into the fire when Sirius spoke again, "Go on."

"Blue, the same colour as the sky every time he and Lily went out to play when they were kids."

Sirius rolled his eyes, "For your sake, just leave it alone."

"I-I don't think I can."

"Then for his sake, leave it alone." Sirius said setting his bottle down on the floor, "I get it, somehow you fell in love with him and somehow you're still in love with him, but... you can't make him love you back. Leave it alone. You have Lily, focus on her."

Sirius has never been the level-headed one in their group. That title usually went to Moony, but right then James reluctantly realised that he was right.

So he left Sirius' apartment that night and the next time he went out with Lily he didn't ask about Severus. Not even once.

That's how it went for the rest of the year until he eventually dropped down to one knee and proposed because... there was no reason not to. Lily was smart and beautiful with a wicked tongue. James cared for her very deeply. James wanted a family, he wanted to get married and Lily was right there.

When the news broke most of their friends seemed happy for them and openly congratulated them. All except for Remus, who congratulated them openly but secretly-

"I hope you know what you're doing James."

The werewolf said as they stood near the corner of the room while Molly kept bringing in plate after plate of food for the guests that had gathered for the engagement party. Sirius and Arthur were talking loudly in another corner and briefly James could see Lily standing with Alice while the brunette laughed brightly at something the redhead said.

"I'm about to get everything I've ever wanted."

"Everything, you've ever wanted?" Remus asked with an arched brow and James shrugged.

"Auror training is almost complete, soon I'll have a lovely wife, someday a few kids-"

"And no future potions master. I heard he might be getting his mastery soon. Youngest one that ever has, they say." Remus said softly and James let out a huff of frustration as he grabbed the werewolf's arm and dragged him a bit closer to the wall.

"I thought you'd be happy for me. I thought you and Sirius wanted me to move on-"

"Not if you're just pretending and trying to drag Lily into the farce with you."

"I'm not pretending. I love Lily."

"But you're in love with Severus."

"I haven't seen him in ages Moony." James said clearly, "How is it fair for me to keep pining after him when he clearly doesn't want me?"

Remus shook his head as James continued, "Besides, we never even had so much as a civil conversation. It was just one shag and that was it, everything before and after with that prat was awful. It was silly teenage infatuation. Lily's different. She and I get along. We have a real relationship-"

"Wasn't that the reason you liked him? Because Snape was always fighting you, he was so frustratingly different and you liked how much he confused you. Isn't that what you said? That you didn't think you'd ever get tired of him-"

"I was a sixteen-year-old brat that couldn't handle not getting everything that I wanted." James huffed, "Sever-Snape was a challenge. A thing that I needed to conquer and-and he wouldn't let me. So I became obsessed and then I pined and became infatuated that's it."

“An infatuation lasting this long?”

“Yes.”

“But not anymore?”

“Yes.”

“Let me ask you this. If you could choose, who would you rather have walking down the isle to you and reciting those bonding charms at the alter with you; Lily or Severus?”

James blinked and stared at Remus for a moment, his mouth opened and closed and then opened again. Before closing again.

Remus scoffed, “I’m sorry, clearly I was wrong, this must be true love.”

James’ jaw clenched, “Why are you even here if you’re not going to be happy for me?”

Remus sighed, “Because you’re one of my best mates and if all of this really makes you happy then fine, I’ll celebrate and be happy with you. But you don’t seem happy James.”

James swallowed and looked away, “Snape didn’t make me happy.”

“Merlin, no. He drove you insane. Like you said, you two never even had a civil conversation with each other.” Remus said with a nod before looking up at his friend, “But after the spell that Sirius cast; I realised that you enjoyed it.”

“Hardly, besides, he and Regulus are practically bonded already from what I’ve heard. There’s no point in holding on to such an old infatuation.”

“So he’s in love with Regulus, that’s what you’ve heard?”

“They live together.”

“That doesn’t mean they’re involved.”

“Lily said Regulus was in love with him.”

“But that doesn’t mean that Snape loved him back.”

“Sirius said they’re always around each other.”

“You know anything involving Snape becomes twisted and corrupt in Padfoot’s mind. He can’t stand Snape. Honestly, if I didn’t know any better, I’d swear he was the one in love with Snape.” Remus said easily only to look up and pause at the look on James face. “I’m not helping am I?”

“Not at all. Moony it almost seems like you’re trying to stop me from getting married.”

“I just don’t want you running headfirst into a mistake because you’ve managed to convince yourself that this is your only option.”

“I’m not, but I-... Severus doesn’t want me-”

“Did he actually say that?”

“Yes multiple times, with various insults thrown in for good measure.”

Remus scoffed, “Yeah that is true isn’t it? Alright,” the werewolf then turned to him and smiled, “Congratulations on your engagement James, I hope you and Lily are very happy together.”

James frowned at him, “Do you actually mean that?”

“Of course, it’s not like you’re just settling right? She makes you happy doesn’t she and as of this point she’s the only person you can ever see yourself with, right? It’s not like you’re welching out out of fear and just waiting for the day when an impossible raven-haired snarky bat falls out of the sky and right into your arms right?”

James’ frown deepened, “This passive aggressive thing you do isn’t funny.”

“No really, my best mate’s marrying the person of his dreams, what’s there not to be happy about.” Remus’ eyes then flickered down to the glass that James had been holding onto that entire time, “More pumpkin juice or are you actually going to have some bubbly now?”

James’ eyes snapped down to his empty glass, before rolling his eyes and glaring at the werewolf. “Juice.”

“I thought Lily doesn’t have a problem with-“

“Just get me my drink you flea bitten twat.”

Remus laughed as he took James’ glass and walked away.

That was two months ago. About a month after James got a letter from the British Wizarding Council of Mastery and Achievement. Severus completed all his requirements and achieved the title of Potions Master. According to the letter, Remus was right; he was the youngest wizard that ever had. James felt...

Happy, oddly proud and... sad.

He’d made plans to go out with Lily for dinner that night but James knew that if he was given the option; he’d end up guzzling down all the whiskey he could find and getting sloshed before the end of the night. He didn’t keep alcohol in the manor anymore. The expensive bottles and older vintages he’d inherited from his parents he just kept locked in one of their vaults at Gringotts, the rest he gave away.

There was no alcohol at home, so he suggested that they stay in and they did.

That unfortunately brought its own host of problems. They talked as they had dinner, James played some chess against an enchanted board while Lily read a book and they retired to bed. It was all very domestic, James thought. And he decided that he was looking forward to their wedding if it was always going to be like that.

But then they went to bed and James couldn’t stop thinking about Severus. He must’ve gotten the letter at the same time that James did.

How did he spend the day? Did he go out to celebrate? Did Regulus go with him? Severus never struck him as the type for crowds so James decided that he probably spent the night more or less the same way that he and Lily did. A quiet dinner and a book. Maybe Regulus at least managed to convince him to go out for dinner. That’s what James would have done and maybe a stroll along the street. Then they’d go home and James would give him a gift. Snape would snap and snark at him, insisting that he didn’t want anything and James would give it to him anyway. It’d be some new books, or maybe some potions supplies? New instruments. Those always looked expensive

whenever James saw them in the window of a store in Diagon Alley. New robes? That actually didn't seem like a bad idea. Potions Master robes to celebrate all his hard work.

They could talk over a nightcap. Tea or coffee. Lily said that Severus loved chocolate, James had been more than just a little surprised to find out about that one. So maybe they could have some hot chocolate. Then they'd go to bed go to bed. James still remembered what it was like that day when Severus broke the spell. the Slytherin had been warm and pliant, almost needy at every touch. Touch starved, isn't that what they call it? After finding out about Severus' childhood, James thinks he can understand why. But that's O.K, if Severus wanted to be touched and held and kissed; James would give him everything he wanted and more. He'd hold Severus against his chest and whisper into his ear, tell him how much he loved him, how much he needed him, how beautiful Severus was while they fucked and kissed like that. He'd wait to hear Severus say it back and then-

James fell back on the bed, breathing hard as he dragged a hand through his now sweat dampened hair as harsh breaths echoed against the walls of the room.

James' eyes were still on the ceiling as he tried to come down from his high only to almost jump right out of his skin when the figure beside him moved into the light beaming in through the window. Bright green eyes and long red hair. Lily leaned over and kissed him. James tried not to tense as the previous fantasy continued to play back in his head.

It was a few minutes before they'd both come down, though James' heart was still hammering in his chest as he tried to keep his eyes on the ceiling and not on the redhead lying against said hammering chest.

"That was different."

"Was it?"

"It's just that you were so quiet for a while, until the last bit."

The last bit, he'd turned her around, away from the light coming through the window. In the shadows even her hair seemed nearly pitch black-

James swallowed thickly and forced out a laugh, "'M trying to keep you on your toes Evans."

Lily scoffed before she started to frown as she looked up at him, "Are you alright?"

"Yeah why?"

Lily moved her hand to his chest and started tapping his fingers against it, mimicking the way it thumped beneath her head, "This doesn't seem alright."

"What can I say, you took a lot out of me." He joked and Lily shook her head but then a contemplative look came onto her face as she just kept tapping his chest.

"You know, I always wondered."

"What?"

"Remember sixth year? When Sirius cast that spell on you and you lost your heart? Dumbledore never said who it was that found it."

James' eyes widened a bit and Lily arched a brow, "Who was it?"

'Your ex-best friend'

"No one."

"No one?"

"Yeah, Hagrid ended up finding it on the quidditch pitch of all places." James lied, "Dumbledore said that it's probably because I wasn't really in love with anyone at the time."

"So it went to the thing you loved instead?" Lily laughed, giving a bright smile, "Figures, of course you love quidditch more than anything else in the world."

"Yours probably would have ended up in the library wouldn't it?"

Lily rolled her eyes, "Hardly, the astronomy tower maybe."

James scoffed only to stop when a thought came to mind. He'd been so good. He managed to not bring him up, but-

"What about Snape? Potions lab, right?"

Lily blinked, "No, actually. The Dark Forest would be more likely, Sev-Snape, loved it out there."

"Really? He never struck me as the outdoors or in general sunlight type."

Lily rolled her eyes again, "It was peaceful, quiet. He used to collect potions ingredients there sometimes. Plus he'd always had a soft spot for animals, he was fascinated by wolves."

"Wolves?"

"Werewolves in specific, but then in fifth year he suddenly stopped going as much. He became so... odd, we used to look up books on wolves all the time and suddenly he'd snap if I so much as mentioned the topic."

Fifth-year, the werewolf incident.

James cleared his throat, "Always seemed difficult to me."

"No something was wrong. I just couldn't figure out what and of course he wouldn't tell me. Maybe things between us started falling apart earlier than I realised." Lily sighed and shook her head again, "Still, it would've ended up in the Forest maybe... Either that or with Leviticus Miller."

"Leviticus Miller, isn't he one of the Magpies beaters?" James started incredulously, "Snape liked quidditch?"

"Oh no, he hated Quidditch. I managed to get him to agree to go to exactly one game with me once in school." Lily laughed, "He hated every minute of it. We just both thought Miller was sexy."

James practically squawked and Lily laughed again. He tried not to pout, failed miserably.

It was a few weeks later when he saw Snape again.

He'd been so good, really, James had been distracted and just generally hadn't had the time to even think about Severus at all. But then his robes finally arrived. The auror robes he'd soon be wearing once he officially started work. James had been so excited, so happy and immediately the first

person he wanted to show was Severus.

That thought immediately dampened his mood. But he still put them on and then wandered around a bit, went to Diagon Alley for a bit and then stopped in at the local Honeydukes... and then apparated to Grimmauld Place. It was stupid, it was so stupid. It wouldn't be long till the wedding and he just wanted to see Severus one last time.

His excuse had been to ask whether or not Severus got his invitation since he hadn't sent back a response as to whether or not he'd be attending. He'd nearly had a heart attack when he heard Severus call out his name and turned to find him standing on the sidewalk.

It was a terrible idea. But he saw Severus and the raven looked good. Really he wore those robes like black was a colour that was made especially for him. Tall and composed, those dark dark eyes almost drilling right into James' soul. And then he spoke and James was reminded of fourth year. While everyone else's voices were still cracking and breaking due to the hateful onset of puberty, Severus Snape came back from vacation sounding like something out of a muggle smut film. Deep and smooth and with a timbre that could send shivers down your spine if he just said the right thing. Merlin, back then both he and Sirius had hated the snarky bat for it. Never once did he acknowledge those times whenever that drawl slipped into his head like molten steel in the middle of his deepest fantasies. Not until sixth when he finally heard that voice moan and gasp as they moved against each other on the bed.

That's when that terrible idea settled in and he decided that he just wanted to spend a bit of time with Severus.

Of course he had to practically blackmail the stubborn bat into agreeing and calling James by his name, but it all seemed worth it when Severus came out of the house wearing blue with his hair down and just looking like something that James had never thought he'd actually see.

He really did look different. He looked better from the time that they were both in school.

The little excursion to the coffee shop had been fun. Though it was concerning that Malfoy was resorting to such severe tactics to try and get Severus in with the Death Eaters. Even more so when he saw the look on Severus' face; he really hadn't thought that Malfoy would take things so far. James had wanted to pull the raven in and comfort him but he knew that wouldn't be received well, so he just decided to take Severus back. Not cause him any more trouble than he already had.

Of course he'd made sure to cast a Patronus after he left, alerting to auror department to the passed out Death Eater in that little coffee shop in London. But before that, Severus said something that brought his world to a screeching halt.

"... all you really had to do from the very beginning; was just ask."

Something inside of James just broke after that. Lily was supposed to come over that night, the last time she'd be with him before the wedding but he cancelled. He couldn't see her, he didn't trust himself to not see her and then not do something... potentially monumentally stupid.

He stayed locked in the house for the rest of the night, trying not to lose his mind in the process. Two days later was his bachelor party. James was grateful for the distraction, thinking that the party would help him get his head on straight and just... keep moving forward. It would've been infinitely easier if Padfoot had been there but Sirius didn't show at all. Moony said that the Animagus said that he was out, getting James' wedding gift and to send his apologies.

"I'll make it up to you mate."

Is what he'd said apparently. James was more than just a little miffed, but Remus and Arthur and the others made sure he was sufficiently distracted. He didn't drink anything the night before so he was perfectly lucid when he woke the next morning in the living room just as the elves were cleaning up the house. Lily sent a letter that he read as he had his morning coffee, telling him about how excited she was and James wrote back that he was too.

Most of the guests had left that morning. James checked on Remus and the werewolf was fast asleep in one of the guest bedrooms. James took a shower got dressed and then just stared at his reflection in the mirror for a while.

This is good.

It's a great thing. He'll be happy, Lily will be happy and Severus will be happy that he'll never have to deal with James again. One chapter of their lives securely closed for all of them. And that's good. It really is.

He left the bathroom and headed down to the kitchen. Remus should be up soon, he can have the elves make something for breakfast. He's a bit hungry too. He should really get around to checking with the wedding planner as well, make sure everything is set and ready.

James was still firmly locked in his thoughts when he turned into his bedroom only to stop when he saw the figure sitting on his bed.

"Merlin's bollocks!" James sighed, shutting his eyes for a moment. "Padfoot?! When did you get here?"

"A while ago." He shrugged and James rolled his eyes once he caught his breathing.

"You have a lot of nerve showing up the day after my bachelor party, you git."

"Didn't Remus tell you?"

"That you're getting me a wedding gift, yeah he told me. It better be something bloody spectacular too or else I'll never forgive you." James said even as a smile spread over his lips. To his surprise Sirius looked off to the side.

"It's... something."

"Oh, shite, what is it?" James asked with a frown and Sirius looked back up at him his lips pulling down slightly, eyebrows furrowing together before he spoke.

"You're really ready to get married to Lily right James? You want to be with her?"

James blinked, "Of course I do. Why would you even--"

"You were with Snape a few days ago, weren't you?"

James tensed, "How do you--"

"Regulus told me, he saw you at Grimmauld place even though I told you not to go there."

"I was just--"

"You were what James? What were you doing with Snape days before you're supposed to marry Lily?" the Animagus let out a sigh, "I didn't think it was true. When Remus told me I wanted him to be wrong but, you still want him don't you? Nothing's changed."

“I-“

“I’m sorry.” Sirius said and James paused in confusion.

“For what?”

“Everything. I can’t stand Snape, you know that. When I talked to you about him I just wanted you to get over him, I didn’t care about how you’d do that or how you really felt about Lily. I just wanted you to get over it. I wanted you to leave him alone but, that was never really going to happen was it? I should’ve been better about it, tried to make amends with Snape maybe I don’t know just – anything to fix all of this!”

James started to frown, “Padfoot-”

“Last night I did something and when I got here this morning, I realised what an absolute idiot I’ve been this whole time. I’m sorry for what I did before and... what I’m about to do now.”

“What’re you talking about?”

Sirius sighed as he got up from the bed and walked around to the closet near the window, “I’m not even sure why I thought I could hide this or what I thought I’d do if I managed to hide it. But I got here earlier before you came upstairs, snuck in through the window. And then I panicked for a bit before realising how stupid I was so, here.”

James watched as Sirius opened the closet door and reached out to take out-

James eyes went wide.

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Lily’s wedding is tomorrow and Severus is leaving tomorrow.

Malfoy’s stunt in London the other day shook him. It made him remember just how dangerous and underhanded Lucius could really be if he wanted and Severus realised that he’s just putting Regulus’ life in jeopardy by staying here a minute longer. Who knows what would happen if the blonde decided to send his little minions to Grimmauld place; if the wards would be able to hold and exactly how far he’d go to try and force Severus’ hand?

He never thought Lucius would go so far.

He was just a brewer, talented with potions and spells but not so remarkable that he was worth killing over surely. And to try and frame him with Potter’s murder? To abduct him? It all seemed like...

Over kill.

He needed to leave, so he pushed his plans up a bit and decided to get a different place from the one he’d had arranged before. Just in case Lucius somehow knew about it and had some sort of nasty surprise waiting for him.

The Dark Mark is looking less and less appealing and Severus almost... He thought about leaving the country, just leaving everything behind and starting fresh somewhere else. Cairo or maybe

Italy, as a potions master he knew he could get a job just about anywhere and really. Britain has been nothing but trouble for him since the moment he was born so why not leave?

Partly because of the fear of Voldemort's followers possibly following him across the border, he could leave but... he couldn't abandon Regulus, after everything the other has done for him how could he? Reg had ties to Britain, ties that he has said that he was willing to break multiple times in his conversations with Severus but Severus didn't want to be the one responsible for making him do that.

Regulus was wonderful, Regulus was perfect. Severus wasn't sure if he deserved it though, scratch that he knew he didn't deserve the younger man. Not when he-

A deep sigh.

He can't leave. If he leaves Regulus would follow him and Severus was so afraid of screwing things up, of not being what Regulus needed and not being able to love him the way that Reg so obviously wanted to be loved. It wouldn't be fair.

"I know you're not ready to say it back yet."

Severus wasn't sure if he'd ever be able to say it back. He doesn't want to end up trapping Reg, not when he could find what he deserves somewhere else and Severus... well-

He's always been alone. This much really makes no difference.

"Severus."

Severus tensed and turned around from where he stood putting the rest of his things away in his bag only to blink in surprise at who he saw.

"James."

The auror was standing right there in the doorway, holding a large pink box with a white silk bow in his hands in his hands. Severus just stared back at him in shock.

"What're you doing here? How did you get inside?"

"Regulus let me in."

"Why?"

James seemed to swallow hard before he stepped into the room and held the box out to Severus. Something about it seemed familiar, it nagged at his memory-

The Slytherin gasped. Without even waiting to ask first he pulled the bow loose and tossed the lid aside. Reached in to lift the silver dome and the cover dropped to the floor with a loud clatter.

Thudump-thudump.

A human heart.

He looked up at James, "What happened?"

James took a deep breath, he carefully put the box on the ground and then took Severus' right hand.

"What're--"

He put Severus' hand against his chest and the raven could feel the fast but steady thump of the auror's heartbeat in his chest. Severus' frown deepened until James then moved the hand and placed it over the place where Severus' heart should've been and the raven felt-

Nothing.

Onyx black went wide,

"How-"

"Sirius." James said simply and Severus' face twisted into fury.

"I'm going to kill that stupid mangey half brained-"

"I found it." James suddenly cut in and Severus eyes snapped up to meet his own, "It was in my house, in my room, on my bed."

Once the implication hit Severus felt like his heart stopped though he could hear it thumping a little faster in the box on the floor.

"I-"

Before he could finish his sentence James had closed the distance between them, cupping the raven's face to seal their lips in a kiss.

XX

Regulus sat at the bar, glaring hard at the glass of whiskey that had been placed before him while his hand clenched tightly against the smooth wood finish.

James Potter showed up at the house a while ago. Regulus had been ready to tell the twat to piss off when he saw the box in the auror's hands and the words died on his tongue. After that all he could do was step aside and let him inside the house, up the stairs to Severus' room. But he couldn't stay in the house, so he grabbed a cloak and left as quickly as apparition could take him.

Just then someone slid into the seat beside him, Regulus looked up and then glared hard.

"Fuck off Sirius." He said grabbing the glass and downing half of its contents with a cringe and a hiss.

Sirius shook his head as he gestured for the bartender to bring him one as well before he settled into his seat.

"Its better that you know now than later."

"I should've never listened to you."

"Reg-"

"I should've never let you in to cast that stupid thing. We would've been happy, eventually."

"Maybe." Sirius said with a sigh just as his own drink arrived, "But you want him to be happy now

right? Actually happy.”

“Potters a twat.”

Sirius scoffed, “He’s a little bit of a twat. But Severus is a prat so in that way they’re perfect together.”

“Go to hell.”

Sirius sighed, “If I had it my way, Snape wouldn’t be in any of our lives period but clearly you all seem to see something in him that I don’t so… I’ve given up on trying to fight it.”

Regulus finished off his glass before calling for another one, “You’re a bastard.”

“Thank you.”

“What about Evans?”

Sirius cringed, “Yeah, that’s going to be messy. The wedding’s tomorrow so, James better figure it out before then. Either way, this’ll all be over soon.”

Regulus sighed just as he got his second glass, “I want him to be happy, so I’ll-I’ll leave it alone too… but the second Potter fucks up, I’ll be there.”

Sirius laughed and looked at his younger brother, “Snape’s been good for you. You weren’t such a fighter before.”

Regulus rolled his eyes, “Is he good for Potter too?”

“I don’t think so, but Remus keeps telling me that I’m wrong. I’ve been wrong about everything else so far so-“

“What do you mean?”

“I thought for sure you’d get it, nearly had a heart attack when I snuck into James’ room and saw the thing on his bed.” Sirius sighed as he took a sip of his drink, “But we’ll just have to wait and see.”

Regulus looked up at his brother and started to pout, “I hate you.”

“I know.” He said reaching over to pat his brother’s shoulder. “I love you too.”

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The heart, box and platter had disappeared.

They were staring up at the ceiling in silence lying under the covers of the bed. Severus suddenly sighed when he lifted his hand to his chest and felt the steady thump under his skin.

“I don’t love you James.”

James turned his head to look at him, “What?”

“I don’t love you.”

“But-“

“I don’t know why the box showed up in your room, but I don’t love you.”

James turned over onto his side, his elbow braced on the bed. “How do you feel about me?”

Severus covered his face with his hands and let out another sigh of frustration before letting them drop back onto the bed.

“I don’t know. I have no idea. I haven’t known since sixth year. I’m not sure why this happened but-“

“That’s fine.” James said quickly, “I’ll help you figure it out, there’s no need to rush.”

Severus gave him a dull look, “You’re getting married tomorrow.”

James paused, “Right.” And then he fell back on the bed before letting out a sigh, “This is a mess.”

“Exactly.”

“How am I going to tell her?”

Severus turned his head to look at the other, “Tell her? Tell her what?”

“That the wedding is off.”

“You can’t tell her that the wedding is off.”

“So you want me to marry her instead, after all of this?” James shook his head, “You might not know how you feel about me, but you love Lily.”

“I-“

“Yes you do. But you want me to go ahead and marry her?”

Severus looked away, “No I don’t.”

“Exactly.”

“What are you going to tell her?”

James shrugged, “Why tell her anything? We could just run away, elope to some far away country. Away from Malfoy and the wrath of Lily Evans.”

Severus scoffed, “They’d both find us. Lily would probably get there first.”

James laughed, “Oh Merlin that’s awful, I shouldn’t be laughing.” And then he shook his head, “No, I... I think I’ll just tell her the truth. She deserves that much right?”

Severus swallowed hard, “She’s going to hate me.”

“She’s going to hate the both of us.” And then James looked at Severus again, “And then what? What’ll that mean for, whatever this is?”

Severus took a deep breath and looked at him as well, “I’ll be leaving soon. You can’t follow me

where I'm going."

"I'm pretty sure I could."

"No, you don't understand. Lucius... after what happened in London, I can't have anyone near me while I'm dealing with that."

"So you're going to deal with it on your own?"

"Yes."

"But--"

"I don't want anyone around me getting hurt because I couldn't make a decision earlier. You're staying here."

"No."

"Potter, don't be a child."

"It's James and I'm not letting you go just because Malfoy and his cretins are acting up." James was sitting up on the bed, leaning over him by then, "If you want to leave then fine, I'll go with you."

Severus' lips pursed, "What if I left the country?"

"I was only supposed to get placed in the department in a few weeks. I can get Kingsley to have me placed in any auror department in the world."

"What about your friends?"

"They'll be fine."

"And Lily?"

"If she hasn't killed me by tomorrow then I think she'll be alright seeing me leave."

Severus scoffed as he shook his head.

"You're ridiculous."

"And that's exactly how I'm going to get you to fall in love with me."

"What if I never do?"

"Then..." James paused, "I meant what I said, about not forcing you to love me. If you want me to go, I'll go. I'll just try and be happy, for however long this lasts."

Severus' eyes softened and he let out a sigh when James spoke again.

"But I think the shagging alone should keep us both pretty satisfied for a while. And there are plenty of ways to spice that up; bondage, threesomes, I heard muggle sex tapes are pretty good too."

Severus rolled his eyes, "I haven't even agreed and I'm already regretting this."

"If we ever get married, but then get divorced again; I will require monthly visits as part of my

alimony.”

“Salazar give me strength.”

“And if we have a kid, I’ll be able to share something with you forever.”

“You’re ridiculous.”

Chapter End Notes

A/N: End

Please review

Flirting with Mr Hyde

Chapter Summary

Severus' day was relatively peaceful

Until the marauders decided to bother him. This wouldn't have been a big deal, he wouldn't have cared; if they weren't all behaving so oddly

Chapter Notes

A/N:

Alrighty then

This is more of a Marauders/Severus thing.

I decided to post this one because its very very similar to the general theme of this fic. Spell is cast, desires and feelings are revealed, that whole thing, but this one is more Remus/Severus heavy. I really really liked this idea so I decided to write it down and I want to continue with it but not right now. So I'm leaving it till I finish some of my other Harry Potter fics first.

Remus/Severus used to be my OTP, but I started losing interest in that ship. Then Sirius/Severus was my OTP and now its James/Severus. My head canon is that James was secretly in love with Severus and just didn't know how to deal with his feelings.

But a while back I read a fic that reminded me of just how much I used to fucking love Snupin, so I really want to do some stuff for Snupin

Anyway, with this one I just had fun with it and decided to post it along with the rest of whatever it is that My Everything has now turned into. I'll come back and expand on this story once some of the others are finished.

Usual apologies

Disclaimer: See previous chapters

Warnings: Some absent consent, nothing explicit but as always be careful.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

It's Sunday.

The weather was awful, the sky was overcast with heavy dark clouds and the wind outside carried the coldest of chills. Most of the students in the castle were huddled up in their respective houses.

Either sitting by the fire in the common room or still curled up under blankets in bed. It was a great day to just spend inside.

Which is why Severus decided to go to the Library.

With the weather being so awful, he knew that most of the open areas at Hogwarts would be vacant and he wouldn't have to worry about any unfortunate incidents involving the marauders or any other tormentor that decided to ruin his day. With Madam Pinch always keeping the library comfortably warm, Severus had no qualms about spending his day reading or studying there for the day. If he stayed in the dorms someone would surely come barging into his room asking for help with potions or arithmancy or charms or just to generally annoy him the way that Rosier sometimes did.

Severus decided that he'd rather just go to the library to read.

It had been a blissfully quiet morning up until that point. Severus felt quite relaxed as he flipped from one page to the next. It's a muggle book that he was pleasantly surprised to find in the muggle studies section of the library. The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll And Mr Hyde. It's been ages since he read the book so on a whim, Severus decided to set his other books aside and sat down to read it. For once he had the time.

It was just as he was getting to the part where Dr Jekyll's lawyer Mr Utterson speaks with Dr Lanyon when the chair beside him suddenly moved and he looked up just in time to see Potter slipping into the chair.

Severus was surprised but managed to hide it well enough.

He can't even have a day, can he?

"Morning Snape." The Gryffindor said, giving the raven beside him a bright smile, "Fancy meeting you here."

At the library, the place where Severus spent at least sixty percent of his time? Really?

Severus didn't bother pointing that out however. He'd long ago reached the point where engaging Potter or any of his braindead morons for any reason just wasn't worth the effort it took. Not even to insult him. And that third-year urge to huff and stay right where he was because *'he was there first'* left him a long time ago as well. Again, it wasn't worth the effort and he wasn't about to waste any of his time on Potter and whatever scheme he had brewing this time.

"What're you reading? Is it any good?"

Severus shut his book and started putting away his things. Maybe staying in his room was better after all. He'll just take the book out with him and finish reading there.

"Snape wait," Potter seemed to stand from his seat as well, Severus tensed, his eyes automatically seeking out the Gryffindor's hands to track any wand movements only to be mildly surprised that he wasn't holding a wand. Maybe Black and the others are somewhere nearby?

Severus' eyes darted around them.

"I just wanted to talk."

"I don't." the Slytherin said shortly and Potter started to pout, it was this odd miserable look that actually made it seem like the other was genuinely... saddened by his response?

“But-but why?”

“Why?” Severus asked incredulously, “Why?”

Severus was so taken aback by the twat’s sheer audacity of asking why that he suddenly found himself at a loss for words.

Last week they almost set his books and clothes on fire in the name of some insipid prank and this bastard has the nerve to ask him why Severus doesn’t want to talk to him?

Dark onyx eyes narrowed into a dangerous glare.

“I’m not in the mood for whatever act you’re trying to pull off right now Potter.” Severus slung his bag over his shoulder and kept his book in his other hand, “Piss off.”

“But-but Snape...” Severus had already turned away from the table and was making his way down the row of shelves when-

“Severus! Please I-“

It was the use of his name and the word please, both coming out of Potter’s mouth in quick succession that made him stop right in his tracks. He turned firstly to tell the Gryffindor to never utter his name ever again, but also to figure out what could have possibly possessed the arrogant toad into using the word, please.

He turned back only to tense tremendously to discover that Potter was on his knees... crying.

“Potter?”

“Severus, please I...” and the Gryffindor got up to his feet, face flushed and tears streaming down his face. He moved back automatically, only to completely forget his surroundings as his back hit a shelf. Potter came right at him, Severus scrambled to pull out his wand when the chaser was suddenly on his knees again, still crying, this time holding onto Severus’ waist.

“Potter unhand me this-“

“I NEED YOU SEVERUS! I CAN’T LIVE WITHOUT YOU!”

Severus’ eyes widened since the stupid idiot was almost screaming at the top of his lungs, that was sure to get madam Pinch’s attention and then they’d both be in trouble.

“Keep it down! What the devil has gotten into you?!” He said dropping his bag and book to grab a hold of Potter’s hands to try and wrench them away. But Potter held on tight he hiccupped and sobbed, his voice cracking.

“I can’t live without you. We need to be together-“

Severus was still struggling, “If this is another prank then you’ve truly hit the bottom of the barrel you arrogant troll! None of this is even remotely funny! Now let me go!” he hissed as he finally managed to get the Gryffindor’s hands off of him and take a step away only for Potter to then throw himself at Severus’ feet arms wrapped around the raven’s legs. He almost stumbled back but quickly caught himself on the shelf. “Potter-“

“I love you so much! I can’t live without you! I won’t! I need you Severus!”

Severus looked around the library, hoping that the other marauders would jump out any minute

now, if only so whatever it is that's happening would stop. But no one jumped out to laugh or jeer at the scene. No one came to mock him for falling for whatever ruse Potter was trying to pull. No.

It was just Severus standing there trying to pull away while James Potter clung to his legs and cried like he'd lost his first-born son or something.

"Please! I can't be away from you--"

"Oh for the love of... enough." He quickly pulled out his wand and aimed it right at the Gryffindor's face, "Stupefy!"

And just like that Potter froze and went silent. Severus let out a heavy sigh as he proceeded to pry himself loose from the other's grip and quickly grabbed his bag. Deciding to just shove the book in a random shelf and get the hell out of there, he'd made it down the row of shelves when-

"SEVERUS!"

His head snapped up in both horror and confusion as he saw the Gryffindor on his hands and knees, sobbing as he held his arms out to the raven.

How did he get out of the spell?

"I LOVE YOU SEVERUS!"

Severus got out of here as quickly as his feet would carry him, even ignoring madam Pinch as she practically screeched asking what in the blue blazes had gotten into Potter this time.

Once he was out of the library and down the hall Severus let out a sigh of relief. The raven took in a few deep breaths as he tried to calm his racing heart.

What in the name of all things good and holy was that?!

A prank? What sort of prank was that?! Potter was sobbing, out in the open while clinging to Severus like his life depended on it, screaming at the top of his lungs. None of what the Gryffindor was saying made sense either. If Severus didn't know any better, he'd swear that it was some sort of desperate unhinged love confession. But that can't be it, so what on earth was it?!

He needs space to breathe. Severus decided to go outside for a bit, hopefully it isn't raining and with the weather being so awful he was sure that he'd be able to get the peace and solitude he so desperately needed right at that moment.

He made his way down the hall, eyes darting around himself a bit nervously since he didn't want to have Potter catch up to him and repeat whatever that was in the library.

He paused at the next turn, almost feeling silly for letting the marauders yet again make him feel so anxious. He tried to shake his head free from those thoughts as he made the next turn only-

"H-Hello, Snape."

A soft timid voice spoke. Severus frowned as he looked to the side to see a figure hiding, though not very well at all, in a nearby alcove. The figure seemed to peak around the wall and Severus tensed when he saw Sirius Black hiding in the alcove nearby. He didn't even need to think about it as he took out his wand and aimed it at the other.

"What do you want?"

Stormy grey eyes went wide and he seemed to move back further into his hiding spot before taking a deep breath and finally stepping out. His hands were wringing nervously in the front of his robes, his cheeks were flushed and his eyes stayed on the floor peaking up at the raven in front of him every few seconds.

“I-I just... I wanted-I wasn’t sure, so I-“

“Stop wasting my time and spit out Black.” Severus snapped and the other jumped, hands clenching in his robes again as he swallowed hard.

“I-I wanted to say hello and-and ask how you’re doing, that’s all.”

Severus stared at the other incredulously, “What?”

Black’s flush went one shade darker, his eyes went back to the floor as his hands started twisting again before he spoke again, “I just-I wanted to say hello.” He took a step forward, Severus instinctively took one back. Black’s eyes widened all over again. “I swear I won’t hurt you or-or prank you. I just wanted to say hello.”

What is happening?

“Yes well, I’m saying goodbye.” Severus started walking around the other, not turning his back to him for a second and Sirius just seemed to watch him through his hair, still nervously wringing his hands.

“It was really nice to see you Severus.”

His name, yet again. This time used with the word nice. Severus paused.

“What’s gotten...” He let out a quiet breath, “It doesn’t matter, just leave me alone.”

Sirius seemed to blink, “B-but, I don’t... I can’t. Severus, please.”

Please.

Potter said please before doing whatever it was that he did in the library.

Severus almost tensed, “Stay away from me.”

He quickly hurried away, still not turning his back on Black while the other’s flush darkened and he started to pout, tugging at his hair before fiddling with his robes again.

Seriously, what’s happening?

Is this some sort of prank? If Black’s playing along as well and... doing whatever that was then maybe it is a prank, but for the life of him Severus couldn’t figure out what the goal was. He’s been told multiple times that he lacked a sense of humour, but even by conventional standards Severus couldn’t figure out what the punchline was supposed to be.

He made it out of the castle, breathing yet another sigh of relief as cold air hit him right in the face and he took in the dreary skies above. Away, he needs to get away from the castle for just a bit.

As predicted, there was no one else outside. The weather really was awful but at least it wasn’t raining. Severus decided to take shelter by one of the large willows beside the lake. At least he’ll be safe from most of the blistering wind there and he’ll have a moment to himself. Stopping by the large tree with its cascading branches, right beside the dark waters of the lake. Severus couldn’t

help but take in another deep breath, he almost regretted not taking the book with him. It might've been quite nice to read out here. Peaceful and-

Severus gasped when he was suddenly grabbed and shoved back hard against the tree. The raven's eyes went wide when he found himself staring into the amber eyes of Remus Lupin. The werewolf looked... somehow he looked ravenous, eyes almost glowing as he kept his hands clenched in Severus' robes to keep him securely against the tree. A low growl seemed to leave the other's throat and Severus' eyes twisted into a glare.

"There you are." His voice was... different. A deeper rougher tone that almost made Severus freeze up before he put that glare back into place and started to struggle.

"Unhand me this instant Lupin!"

"No."

"No?!"

"They've kept you away from me for far too long." Lupin said ignoring the Slytherin's struggles and protests as he moved in closer and seemed to take in a deep breath all along the raven's neck. Lupin seemed to shiver as he let out a shuddering sigh right up against Severus' ear, a sound that did in fact make him freeze if only because he couldn't understand what was happening.

"You still smell exactly the same."

"Lupin-"

"Tell me boy. Do you fear me?" The Gryffindor pressed up right against him and Severus' eyes went comically wide when he felt a thick hard bulge press into his thigh. Either Lupin's got a very large wand in his pocket or...

Severus' efforts doubled as he tried to move his legs to kick the other or just get some kind of distance to get away. but Lupin was strong... confusingly strong.

"Lupin if you don't let me go this instant-" Severus gasped when a hand slipped in under his robes and pulled his shirt and jumper loose to go up his shirt. He bit back a squeak as he tried to squirm away, while a low growl seemed to vibrate from Lupin's chest.

"I'm going to sink into you and breed you full."

Severus tensed one final time as he felt teeth along his neck. The Slytherin quickly slipped his wand from his pocket and aimed it right at Lupin's chest. Crying out the first spell he could think of.

"Bombardo!"

Lupin went flying backwards and landed with a splash right in the lake. Severus dropped to the ground. Eyes wide in shock when he realised what he'd just done. Bombardo is an extremely dangerous spell to use against a person, let alone using it at close range. The waters rippled and started to settle back, Severus' heart raced at the thought that he may have hurt Lupin beyond repair and what that would mean only-

The waters rippled again and Lupin rose to the inky black surface, dragging a hand through his wet locks as he looked right at the Slytherin on the ground.

He's unharmed? But-

“OUTSTANDING!” Lupin suddenly roared and the raven flinched. Those amber eyes had darkened and yet filled with an unhinged sort of glee as his lips pulled into a maniacal grin as he came closer to the shore not looking away from Severus once. “That’s it boy! This is how my mate should be! You need to be a strong! You need to be a fighter!”

Severus quickly grabbed his bag from where he’d dropped it and scrambled up to his feet even as the other called out-

“Mark my words boy! I will have you for my mate! They can’t keep me away anymore!”

What the fuck?! What the fuck?! What the actual bleeding fuck?! Severus ran.

He didn’t stop once he reached the castle or once he got to the dungeons. No, he ran and ran until he made it all the way back to his room in the dorms and quickly cast every lock and privacy charm he could think of on the door before he collapsed right beside the bed.

Seriously

What’s going on?!

XX

It was part of a prank that backfired spectacularly.

April fools was coming up and the marauders had big plans, plans that couldn’t get bogged down by silly things like class attendance or curfew. They’d planned a whole day of pranks and fun... well, fun for them anyway. One of which included sneaking into Slytherin house and changing the colour of the common room and dorm rooms from silver and green to red and gold. Another prank included putting up a confundus barrier right outside of Ravenclaw to drive them mad with frustration and another was to set off dung bombs in Hufflepuff. They planned a few low-level pranks on Gryffindor just so they could throw suspicion off of themselves. And then of course they’d been working on a prank just for Snivellus as well, just to make sure the snarky bat stayed in his place.

Yes, it would be a grand day indeed. Unfortunately, they had the issue of classes and curfew to contend with. Try as they might, they couldn’t figure out a way to get all of their pranks set up and done, without drawing attention to themselves through their absence either in class or in the tower. That’s when Peter made the offhanded comment of how great it would be if they each had two of themselves.

“One could go to class, the other could go out pranking.”

He’d said.

That’s when Remus made the *offhanded* comment on a ritual that he’d read about in some book in the library.

“Supposedly, you can make a clone of yourself but it wouldn’t be a real person so you’d need to give it precise commands on what to do and say and even then it doesn’t last very long, a few hours

at the most.”

Apparently, these clones were used as decoys during eras of conflict to distract the enemy or draw their fire.

James and Sirius decided that they wanted to try it, just to see if it would work and if it did work well, then their problem of class attendance on April fools was all but solved. Remus had thought it to be an awful idea though, he even brought them the book where he found the article on the ritual and there was barely any information in there at all. Just vague references to Polyjuice potions and mirror spell casting. But then Sirius remembered a very specific book that was kept in the Black family library. He only remembered it from those few times he needed to get away from his mother and decided to hide in there. It was a history book detailing potions and spells used during the first Wizarding War.

It took some doing but he managed to force Kreacher to bring him the book at school and lo and behold the spell on double casting was right there. or at least that’s what they thought anyway.

It was difficult to read, with most of the descriptions being in Latin. Sirius was surprised that he didn’t remember that bit but they shrugged it off and got to work on translating.

The potion they needed to perform the ritual was extremely difficult to make, Remus could tell that much and since none of them had the talent required to brew the thing they didn’t bother trying. They couldn’t find anywhere where the potion could be sold and they couldn’t very well ask Slughorn for help. The idea had come to mind that Snape could probably brew it if he wanted to, his potions marks in school were unparalleled Afterall. But there was about as good a chance of Snape helping them with anything as there was of a hippogriff mating with devils snare. They had no other option, so they decided to cheat. From what they read the potion – that they really should have made – was a mix of veritaserum, Polyjuice potion, a blood replenishing potion, skelegrow and amortentia weirdly enough.

“Heart, mind, body and soul.” Remus explained as they all sat huddled together in the dorms with the book in his arms and a frown on his face, “Amortentia for the heart, Veritaserum for the mind and for the body you have blood replenishing potion and skelegrow. The Polyjuice is to make sure they look like us. And we’ll be supplying the soul.”

“Alright, well, if we could just mix them then why did it have that bit on brewing the potion from scratch?”

“Because making it the other way is dangerous, it doesn’t say why though, just that it should be a last resort.”

“What about the soul bit?” Peter asked nervously, “We won’t be selling or sacrificing our souls or something right?”

Remus looked at the book and frowned, “No, I’m not sure what it means that bit’s hard to translate.”

“It’ll be fine Wormtail.” Sirius said dismissively before looking at Remus, “It’ll be fine right?”

Remus sighed, “It doesn’t look like a soul sacrifice, anima proiectura. Soul Projection? Something like that.”

Peter’s lips pursed, “This seems like a bad idea.”

Remus nodded, “That’s what I keep saying.”

“You said that when we were trying to get our Animagus forms. Besides, it’s not supposed to last long right?” James said easily from his spot on his bed. “It’ll be fine.”

They raided Slughorn’s potions stores, by the time the old professor realised that things were missing it would be too late anyway.

That Friday they locked their dorm room door and got started by mixing the potions. They seemed to go from one colour to the next. Remus helped them make sure their measurements were about as precise as they could be and then they got started on the hard part.

It required mirror magic so the marauders went to the bathroom connected to their room, each standing in front of a mirror. Remus yet again repeated what an awful idea it was while Peter nodded nervously in agreement. Sirius just waved them off and James while a bit apprehensive was too curious to see if it worked to back down.

Each mirror in the bathroom had its own basin. The marauders closed the drains and then poured the potions mixtures inside. And then they each had to add a drop of their own blood. Then to cast the spell, they had to stare into the mirror focusing on their eyes in the reflective glass as they waved their wands around the mirror and chanted.

“Quod est intus, debet exire.”

They had to do this three times. So they did.

All of the sudden the potions in the sinks started to glow enveloping the entire room in bright blinding light and they all passed out.

When they came to the next morning; they discovered that the ritual worked, though not the way they’d hoped.

Not the way they’d hoped at all.

“What’re we going to do?” Sirius hissed as they glanced around the room nervously at the other occupants in there as well.

James, Sirius and Remus stood huddled by the wall nearest to the bathroom. Peter was on his bed. Talking very quietly to his... double, though they couldn’t imagine what he and Wormtail could be talking about when they couldn’t even really look at their other selves without being frustrated, annoyed and just feeling generally disturbed.

It was a mess.

Instead of just creating doubles that they could command and order to do what they wanted, what the spell did was... well, it created different versions of themselves. When Remus went through the book again, he discovered a part that he’d somehow managed to miss while he was translating the spell at the bottom of the page.

Anima proiectura. Soul Projection?

It didn’t just mean that their souls would be projected onto the doubles that they’d created. Apparently, what it did was create a living breathing representation of their inner selves as they really were. Something that Sirius was sure must have been a total lie because his inner self, seemed to be this shy awkward thing that couldn’t seem to speak more than two sentences at a time, couldn’t hold eye contact and blushed constantly.

Sirius growled at the thought as he watched Padfoot, as they decided to call him, sitting on his bed as he talked to Prongs.

James got of lucky. Prongs seemed to be exactly like him, just as animated and confident as the original. It seemed strange to him that he and James didn't seem to get along very well, they actually argued a lot; bickering back and forth about everything and nothing almost every time that they spoke.

Peter's double seemed... odd. He was quiet, very quiet. His eyes constantly darting about this way and that barely saying more than one word at a time. The only person he seemed to be willing to talk to was Peter himself, though Sirius supposed that Peter's quiet and nervous nature was the cause of that.

But the worst one, the absolute worst, had to be Remus double. Because you see Sirius' double might be an awkward mess, and Peter's double might be a bit reserved and sure James wouldn't stop arguing with Prongs, but Remus' situation seemed much worse than all three of them combined.

It was made even worse when they read yet another previously undiscovered clause at the bottom of the page. The clause detailing that their doubles weren't temporary the way that they'd hoped they would be. They wouldn't disappear in a flash of light or a puff of smoke in a few hours. Oh no, they would stay right where they were and would remain there until they broke the spell. And if they didn't break the spell within one week of the casting, they would remain there forever.

They fucked up.

Remus immediately got to work to try and figure out exactly what it is that they needed to do in order to break the spell. Sirius, James and Peter also did their best in that regard, but so far they hadn't managed to find much. At that point it was starting to look like they'd have no choice but to go to the headmaster and ask for his help.

Sirius looked over to Remus, the blonde was an anxious wreck. He looked worryingly pale, wringing his hands and staring nervously at the double lounging quite comfortably on his bed. Those amber eyes staring up at the ceiling unblinking.

"Don't worry Remus." James said forcing a smile as he put a hand on his friends shoulder, "We'll figure this out."

Remus looked up at James and then just looked back at his double, biting the nail of his thumb.

The other marauders had it so easy, really they did.

Because you see, while the spell supposedly just put a reflection of their inner selves into the bodies of their doubles, that's not what it did with Remus. The spell didn't just put a reflection of Remus' soul into his copy. Oh no.

Instead, it let out Moony.

Chapter End Notes

A/N:

I'll come back to this last one.

As previously stated, I'll come back to this one, I want to come back to this one. But I'll only do that after I've finished my other stuff. But it was fun to write.

On a slightly less related note; I've been looking for a story where Moony somehow gets his own body and then proceeds by pursuing cough*stalking*cough Severus but I couldn't find one. If such a fic exists and I've just been completely oblivious this whole time, then drop me a line because I wanna read it.

The Birthday Sex Charm

Chapter Summary

It's James' birthday. Sirius has the brilliant idea to cast the birthday sex charm on him.

It's a stupid spell made by some clearly sexually frustrated teenager before being passed on from one equally sexually frustrated teenager to the next. James doesn't think it's a good idea. Even if he and Lily are dating now, he doesn't think she'll be too happy to show up in his bed when they hadn't even had any plans to see each other. But while the charm is still working, he might as well use it right? And Lily could just leave if she's all that upset about it, he can grovel later.

The birthday sex charm works by transporting the person of your deepest darkest desires to your bed, the moment that you come into contact with it. It has four rules:

One: The person that it transports must be someone that you've known for at least three years

Two: The person that it transports must be someone that you've spoken to at least three times

Three: The person that it transports has to be someone that you've masturbated to at least three times

Four: The person that it transports has to have thought of you in a sexual way at least once

Chapter Notes

A/N: DISCONTINUED – this one isn't getting finished. I'm sharing it because I liked the idea, although... Yeah, this one's kind of ridiculous

Warnings for dubious consent and many other horrible things. If you require trigger warnings then maybe just don't read this at all. It's not on the level of Dead-dove-do-not-eat, not even close, but if you're sensitive to issues of consent then seriously, walk away.

The version I have in my head of Voldemort in this is closer to Tom Riddle than Voldemort. I figure around this time he's just only really gotten into the Horcrux thing and since there's no prophecy yet he hasn't kicked things into high gear just yet. But for the sake of it canon divergence is also very present here

So pairings go James/Severus, James/Lily (not much, more mentions really), Tom Riddle/Severus, a little Remus/Severus (because I can)

Usual apologies

Disclaimer: See previous chapters

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Today is the day.

“Severus.”

It’s finally here.

“You’ve done well, my Severus.”

“Thank you, my lord.” He felt a hand on his chin, smooth and cold lifting his chin ever so slightly so he was looking up at the man that he was knelt in front of. The room was dark, vacant. It would be only him and Lord Riddle in the room for this.

Bright red eyes almost immediately seared into him, the barest smile spreading over his lips. Severus felt a shiver run down his spine

This is it, after years he’s about to pledge his loyalty to the Dark Lord.

It’s... it’s been a journey. An ordeal.

Severus had had doubts while he was in school, dark creeping thoughts almost scaring him from what he knew should be his ultimate goal.

The Dark Lord was offering him power, knowledge everything that he’s ever wanted. And all he wanted in return was Severus himself. That was a price he was more than willing to pay. After all, no one’s ever wanted him, no one ever really cared. The one person that he had thought would always be by his side abandoned him years ago. His mother is dead and his father while unfortunately still alive wants nothing to do with him. Thankfully the feeling is mutual. He hasn’t been back to Spinners end in years. Lucius was letting him live in the manor while he finished his mastery, helping him with whatever he needed. Apparently, the Dark Lord approved of his plans to get his mastery before he could take the mark. But now his mastery is complete, it’s time for him to finally take his place.

No one wanted him. No one cared. So why not give himself completely to the one person that did.

“This has been a long-time coming Severus.” The Dark Lord said, his hand slipping from Severus’ chin down to his neck before going up and into his hair, “Since the moment Lucius first brought you to me, I knew I had to have you here by my side. Is that something you want as well, Severus?”

“Yes, my Lord. More than anything.”

“Are you ready to take your place right now, Severus.”

“Yes.” Severus said almost breathlessly and the Dark Lord smiled.

“Give me your hand.”

Without hesitation Severus held out his left hand, his arm already exposed and ready to receive the mark. The man on the chair before him lifted his hand up to his lips to press a kiss on the palm. Severus shivered yet again.

“Do you want to be mine Severus?”

“Yes, my Lord. I pledge my life, body and magic to you.”

“And your soul?”

“Yes my Lord.”

The Dark Lord’s smile grew as he turned the younger man’s hand around to expose his wrist, reaching for his wand with his other hand as he looked into Severus’ dark eyes.

“This will hurt but the pain will be worth it. Are you ready?”

“Ye-“

Riddle blinked when there was a sharp pop and the raven before him suddenly disappeared. He was just gone. Though Severus’ clothes and even his wand were on the floor in front of him...

He’s been transported, but to where?

Tom’s eyes narrowed into a dark glare and his jaw clenched before he practically roared.

“LUCIUS!”

XX

He wasn’t drunk, just barely tipsy.

It was his twenty-first birthday and he’d gone out with the lads. It’s quite a milestone so under any other circumstances he would’ve elected to stay out for the whole night to get sloshed with his mates. But since James’ mother passed two years ago, he wasn’t all that comfortable with the idea of leaving his dad alone in the manor for extended periods of time. Fleamont insisted that it wasn’t necessary for James to spend so much time at home. Encouraged James to go out as much as he wants and stay as late as he liked with his friends but, Euphemia’s death hit them both pretty hard.

Not that they hadn’t seen it coming. After all James’ parents were both quite old and his mother always a bit sickly, but that didn’t stop it from hurting. He knew it hit his father especially hard. They loved each other dearly, they’d been together for years and only had one child. James didn’t like leaving him alone, he didn’t want to not be there in case Fleamont needed him.

So he went out with the lads but didn’t stay too long, he even moved his plans with Lily to a different day just so he could still celebrate his birthday but could still be at home by nine o’clock. And he managed to do just that.

When James got home he peered into his father’s room, saw the man breathing deep and steady in the deep embrace of sleep and then quietly shut the door behind him before making his way over to his own room. Though he was almost dreading it.

With every step James took down the hall and around the corner towards his room he felt his buzz disappear. By the time he actually made it to his door he felt almost completely sober. He opened the door, stepped inside, shut it behind him and then just stared at his bed.

He matured a bit since his days at school, so he no longer insisted on having just Gryffindor colours of gold and red adorning his room. The large fourposter bed was now a cool mix of black,

different shades of blue and silver here and there that he decided that he liked quite a bit after he turned twenty. Even if the silver had him thinking of Slytherin a bit more than he'd strictly liked.

His huge warm comfy soft bed.

James swallowed hard, briefly debating the option of just sleeping on the floor or on the couch in the living room or in the bathtub or just anywhere that wasn't his bed.

Sirius, that stupid idiot.

Since James didn't have plans with Lily, Sirius – in his very inebriated state – decided that he should give James an extra birthday gift on top of the extra tickets to see the next Cannons game. He cast the birthday sex charm on him.

The birthday sex charm entails transporting the person of your deepest darkest desires to your bed the second that you make contact with your bed. James hadn't thought that the thing actually worked until Sirius told him about exactly how and why Marlene McKinnon was leaving his apartment the day after his birthday when they went to see him. He swore up and down that it worked, swore up and down that it was brilliant and swore up and down that Lily wouldn't be upset about it if she ended up popping up on James' bed. Remus thought it was an awful idea.

James agreed with him. Firstly because he knew Lily would pitch the most perfect fit if he tried to pull a stunt like that on her but secondly because, it was kind of ridiculous. Who has sex with someone purely because they were apparated from existence and then pops up on their bed? Only in Sirius' world would this be a thing that happens. Most of the people he fancies just seem to be that inexplicably attracted to him. Though James knew that he carried that same attraction as well, Lily Evans was different. She's always been different. Lily Evans would not be amused.

"Plus what if someone other than Lily shows up?" Remus had asked giving the Animagus a very tired look, "Remember, when you had Arthur cast that spell on you? You were hoping for Alice not Marlene."

"Still worked out though didn't it?" Sirius said easily as he downed yet another shot of whiskey, "Alice is engaged to Frank now, so it all worked out."

James still thought it was a terrible idea, Sirius cast the spell anyway.

Now he's home and... staring at his bed. To buy time James headed to the adjoined bathroom and got changed, brushed his teeth and came back out in a loose grey shirt and soft plaid pyjama bottoms. He came out and just stared at the bed yet again.

Maybe Lily wouldn't freak out. Maybe she'd just take it in stride the way she took most of the Marauders shenanigans since they all graduated from school. Maybe she'd laugh it off. They'd been planning to spend his birthday together anyway and wouldn't that just be helping them achieve that? She might not be that upset about it. Hey, maybe he would end up getting lucky after all.

James stepped closer to the bed, almost reached out to touch it. The stupid thing was almost calling out to him. Whispering in his head that going along with this mess would be a really good idea.

Maybe he was more drunk than he realised.

James just let out a sigh and decided to touch the bed. There's a chance Lily would be pissed, there's a chance she would be very very pissed but there's also a slim miniscule chance that he might get lucky. That small miniscule chance had his slightly tipsy brain convinced that it was

worth a shot. If she was pissed, then she'd be pissed and she could leave and he could grovel in the morning.

Without another thought James reached out to touch the bed. He heard a sharp pop and looked up to find-

"What... POTTER?!"

James eyes went comically wide, "SNAPE?!"

It was Severus Snape. The same Severus Snape he hasn't seen since he graduated from Hogwarts. The same Snape he hated and then pranked every single day. It was Snape!

And he was naked on James' bed.

James instantly felt himself flush.

Snape looked, he looked a little different from school. Different from that time when they hung him upside down by the lake and undressed him.

Snape... filled out. Still quite lean mind you but he wasn't that skinny beanpole that he'd been back then. Those dark onyx eyes now somehow seemed darker, sharper and more focused, his skin was healthier though still quite pale and his hair. Those inky black bones straight locks cascaded down just a little bit past his shoulders slipping over that pale skin. His nose while still shaped oddly no longer looked so odd on his face, though James had noticed that much at least in six year.

Snape looked different.

So different in fact that James' eyes ended up slipping down to the Slytherin's waist down to his pelvis, towards his-

Snape let out a noise, something close to a squeak but with that smooth baritone the other has been sporting since fourth year it didn't sound quite close enough to be a squeak. He pulled his legs together before reaching for the throw at the side of the bed to pull over and cover himself and then those dark eyes went up to fix on James in the darkest glare.

"Potter, what in the name of Circe is happening?"

"I... uhm." James didn't know what to say.

"Is this another one of those moronic pranks of yours?! Really you can't even give it up now that we've graduated and have absolutely nothing to do with each other! You're still the same egotistical mindless bastard that you've always been!"

James blinked, "What-"

"What what is it Potter? You couldn't find someone else to torture? Run out of victims to torment with your incessantly childish behaviour so you decided to try and drag me back into your sick twisted games?!"

"What- that's not what this is!"

"Then what is this? Why am I naked, in a room with you when I was-" Suddenly Snape's eyes went wide and he paled considerably, his hands clenched in the throw he'd pulled around himself, "Oh dear Salazar-"

“Snape I-“ James paused before taking a step closer to the bed, “I didn’t-“

“Where are my clothes?”

“What?”

“My clothes and my goddamn wand Potter, where are they?!”

“I don’t know you just showed up like this!”

“What do you mean I just showed up like this? How did you force me here?!”

James cringed at the word force.

He can’t tell Snape about the spell.

“I...”

What does he say?

Snape seemed to lose his patience as he got up from the bed, still with the throw around his waist before he muttered an accio wand. Nothing happened and Severus let out a huff of frustration.

“Where’s your floo?”

“Down the hall to your left, the last room to your right.” He said without thinking as he pointed in the opposite direction of his father’s room.

Before he’d even finished what speaking Snape snatched the door open and stormed down the hall. James followed him, more out of instinct than anything else as the raven seemed to take his direction and quickly found the floo. He grabbed the powder in the jar beside the fireplace and immediately stepped inside.

James couldn’t stop himself from calling out, “Snape!”

Snape paused and looked up at him.

“I’m sorry.”

“Go to hell.” He hissed.

“Snape-“

“Malfoy manor.” He said before throwing the powder down and disappearing in a blaze.

XX

The next morning Remus was the first one to arrive.

James was grateful. He needed someone to talk to about what happened and with Sirius being... Sirius, he didn’t quite think that the Animagus would take it very well that Severus Snape had been the one to show up on his bed instead of Lily. Not that he was taking it too well either but, he needed someone more impartial to talk to.

Remus arrived just after breakfast. His father was in the study reading. They were in the sitting room.

Remus just blinked.

“Snape?”

“Yes, Snape.”

“Severus Snape?”

“Yes.”

“The same Snape we went to school with, the one who was in Slytherin. That’s who showed up in your bed?”

“For the last time yes Moony.”

“Merlin...” Remus frowned, “What happened?”

James was on the couch on the opposite side, dragging a hand through his hair, “He freaked out, started screaming about how I’m a stupid bastard, demanding I tell him how he got there-“

“Did you tell him?”

“No, of course not! Do I look insane?!” James huffed, “Besides, he got up before I could think of what to say and left.”

“Naked?”

James felt himself flush, “He took one of my blankets with him.”

Remus scoffed as he shook his head, “Bloody hell. That’s mad.”

“You have no idea.”

“So you didn’t...”

James looked up at the werewolf and frowned, “Didn’t what?”

Remus arched a brow at him and suddenly it clicked in James head. Hazel eyes went wide and he immediately got up from his seat.

“No, of course not! Why would you-“

“Sorry I was just making sure.” Remus said holding his hands up in surrender before he paused and his head gave a tilt, “But he showed up naked in your bed?”

“For the last time yes.”

“What was that like?”

“What?”

“Snape, what did he look like?”

James looked at him incredulously, “Seriously Moony?”

Remus gave a slight shrug, “You remember what he was like in school, always covered from head to toe. You never wondered-“

“Did you?”

“Sometimes.” Remus admitted. James’ face twisted into every manner possible before settling on disgust.

“That’s disgusting Remus. Besides, everyone saw him in second year.”

“He was twelve. We were twelve. He must’ve changed some since then. So has he?”

“What’s gotten into you?”

Remus let out a soft laugh, “He was interesting, but I’m sure I don’t need to tell you that.”

“Excuse me?”

The werewolf gave him a very dry look, “The rules of the charm. It works to bring you the person you most desire. Someone you’ve known for three years. Someone you’ve spoken to at least three times and someone that you’ve gotten off to while thinking about them at least three times.”

James’ mouth opened and closed and then he started pacing. “I don’t fancy Snivellus.”

“But you’ve masturbated to him?”

James flushed he didn’t look at Remus as he kept pacing, “Maybe...”

“Maybe?”

“Yes, alright. But my mind wanders sometimes while I’m... you know and I can’t control what I think about when I’m like that. Can you?”

“Your mind wanders to Snape when your hand is on your prick?” James glared at him darkly, Remus looked way too amused. “I mean I get it.”

James almost paused, “You get it?”

Remus shrugged James cringed, “Have you gotten off on thinking about Snape?”

“A few times.”

“That’s disgusting,”

“That’s the pot calling the kettle black don’t you think?”

James kept pacing while Remus kept talking, “I mean his voice is kind of ridiculous isn’t it. And he’s intimidating in a way that’s almost sexy.”

“Moony-“

“But really; what does he look like?”

“Remus!”

The werewolf started laughing, “I’m sorry. I’m sorry. You must be very upset James.”

“You bloody well know that I’m upset!” James dragged a hand over his face, shutting his eyes, “Merlin, it was so embarrassing.”

“Why was it embarrassing?”

“What do you mean why was it-“

“Snape is the one that popped up on your bed naked, without a clue as to how or why. How is that embarrassing for you?”

“Because its Snape!”

“And? You stripped him in front of everyone at school.”

“That was different.”

“How?”

“All I did was pull his pants down and-and he was twelve! I was twelve-“

“It was still Snape though.”

James huffed, “You’re not helping.”

“And exactly how would you like me to help you now? Snape’s gone right? It happened its over-“

“Yeah I-I know that I just...”

Remus head gave a tilt, “It’s curious though, that Snape showed up on your bed.”

James rolled his eyes, “We already went through this.”

“I’m not talking about the wanking. The spell was supposed to bring you the person you most desire; so why wasn’t it Lily?”

James shook his head, “I-I don’t know-“

“But more interestingly why did *Snape* show up.” Remus wondered out loud his eyes going to a contemplative look, “The last rule of the charm is that whoever shows up, has to have thought of you in a sexual way at least once. So wouldn’t that mean that Snape thought of you like that at some point.”

James stopped right in his tracks, “No.”

“It’s the only way he would’ve gotten here.”

James shook his head, “No-“

“Maybe he fancied you once.”

“That’s... No. It’s impossible.”

“Clearly not.” Remus sighed as he leaned back on the couch, “What’re you going to do about it?”

“Nothing, obviously.”

“Then why are you so worked up. We both know Snape would never come back here to see you,

willing or otherwise. It's over calm down."

James started pacing again, "He went to Malfoy."

"What?"

"Snape, when he left in the floo. He went to the Malfoy manor."

"And?"

"And... It doesn't seem weird?"

"Why would it? They were around each other a lot in school. How is it weird they're around each other now?"

"I--"

Remus watched James as he started pacing again and he frowned, "It's always bothered you seeing Snape around Malfoy, hasn't it?"

"What? No. I didn't care about who Snivellus was around."

"Yes it did. It still bothers you."

"No it doesn't."

"Then why do you care that he went to Malfoy's last night?"

James stopped and opened his mouth to speak only to stop when they were interrupted.

"James! Your dad let me in."

A few moments later Sirius walked into the sitting room, looking a little worse for wear. Looking a little hungover even as he smiled, "There you are, you missed out last night. Morning Moony."

"Morning Sirius." Remus said back with a smile while Sirius slumped into one of the vacant armchairs before looking up at James.

"Seriously, you should've stayed longer James. But maybe you had an even better night than we did." Sirius said as he looked around a bit, "Where is she? Or has she left already?"

"Who?"

"Lily, remember the spell or..." Sirius' eyes widened a bit, "Or did someone else show up instead?"

James almost froze before he cleared his throat, "No. No one showed up because I didn't go anywhere near my bed."

"What?"

"I slept in here." James said folding his arms over his chest, "It was a crazy idea Sirius, Lily would've slaughtered me."

"No she wouldn't,"

"Yes she would."

"I agree with James," Remus said, "She would've killed him."

Sirius just huffed out a sigh, "So you haven't touched your bed at all since last night? Not even this morning?"

"No, I'm just glad that I'll be able to sleep without worrying about that tonight."

Sirius gave a snort, "That's unlikely."

James frowned, "What do you mean?"

"Once its cast the spell can stay in effect for two days."

Remus frowned as well, "Doesn't it only work on your birthday?"

Sirius rolled his eyes, "No. It's just called the birthday sex spell because... Honestly I'm not sure why. You can cast it anytime of the year, it doesn't have to be on your birthday."

"Really?"

James' eyes narrowed into a glare, "You're a git, you know that. Why the hell did you cast that on me?"

"Seemed like a good idea at the time, also I was very drunk. Still feeling a bit hungover actually, almost feels like the pepper up isn't working." Sirius said rubbing a hand over his face when Remus spoke with a tilt of his head.

"How does that spell go again?"

"Ah... Desideria mea libera ."

"And you have to have someone else cast it on you right?"

"Yeah..." Sirius almost frowned, "Why?"

Remus shrugged, "Just curious."

"Moony, don't tell me you have your eye on someone?" Sirius gave a grin, "Anyone I know?"

"I might." Remus explained, "I mean, I just got a job moved into a new place. So I figure it might be time to have a guest over."

James' gaze snapped over to the werewolf who was pointedly not looking at him.

"Yeah? Who is it?" Sirius asked.

"I'm not telling you that."

"Well then what do they look like?"

Remus paused, "Pale, dark hair, dark eyes, wicked tongue."

"Really? Sounds a little like my type actually."

Remus scoffed, "I doubt it."

"Merlin, my head still hurts." Sirius then pushed himself up from the chair. "I need water, maybe

that'll help the potion work faster.”

He got up and left the room headed towards the kitchen when James turned a glare on Remus.

“Really?”

“What?”

“You don’t actually plan on using that spell to get to Snape, do you?”

Remus shrugged, “Why not? It’s not like you want him.”

“It’s Snape!”

“I wasn’t like you and Sirius, James. I never hated him, I never tried to prank him and I’m not afraid to admit that I’d like to shag him... unlike some people.” Remus said now pointedly looking at James and the other just huffed out a frustrated sigh.

“What makes you think he’d even show up anyway? You don’t know that he thought of you that way.”

“Oh so now you’re willing to admit that he might’ve possibly fancied you?” Remus asked and James’ mouth snapped shut, the werewolf shook his head with a scoff, “I’m willing to take the chance. He was so interesting, wasn’t he?”

“He’s going to kill you.”

“According to you he showed up naked without a wand, I think I’ll do alright and since I don’t think he really hated me as much as he hated you lot... who knows. I might get lucky.”

James just stared back at the werewolf, “You’re doing this on purpose aren’t you? You’re trying to get me upset.”

“But why would you be upset James. It’s not like you care about *Snivellus* and who he shags right so... I don’t see the problem.” Remus said simply and James’ glare intensified just as Sirius came back to the room.

“Feeling better Padfoot?” Remus asked just as Sirius slumped back into his previous seat.

“A bit, the water helped some.” He let out a soft sigh, “But tell me about this bird you’re interested in, is it a bird? If you’ve known em for three years then I feel like I should know who it is.”

“You do.”

“Then why not just tell me?”

“Cause they’d kill both of us if I did.”

“Feisty then?” Sirius smirk grew, “You know whoever this is really is starting to sound like my type. You can’t set me up Moony? Bet they’d love me.”

Remus let out a bark of laughter, James resisted the urge to laugh hysterically.

“Un-bloody-likely.”

“Well how would-“ Sirius frowned, “Wait, you know who it is Prongs? Don’t leave me waiting

who is it?"

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

It was four days later when James made a rather drastic decision.

He was pretty sure that Remus was just messing with him, but with the full moon that very same week he also knew that the werewolf probably wouldn't risk making a pass at Snape when he was that close to the full moon. His emotions were always unstable around that time and James knew that he usually only liked to be around close friends when he was like that.

Four days later James made a decision and though he was sure that Remus was just messing with him he still wasn't sure about asking the werewolf for help with his... drastic decision.

So he asked his father.

"You want me to what?"

"Just cast a spell on me dad, I'd do it myself but apparently someone else has to do it for you."

The older man's lips pursed, "A spell for what exactly?"

"I can't really explain it." James started, "All you have to do is cast it and I'll take care of the rest."

"It's not dangerous is it?"

"No, no its not. Please dad?"

Fleamont let out a heavy sigh from his spot in front of his son in his study before he got up and walked around his desk. Picking up his wand as he did.

"Alright. How does it go?"

James took a deep breath, "You swirl the wand around clockwise. The spell is desideria mea libera."

"Desideria... isn't that-" Fleamonts eyes suddenly went wide, "The birthday sex spell?! James Charlus Potter, exactly where did you learn that spell and why?!"

"I-" James paused and then his eyes went equally wide, "Wait? How do you know that spell?!"

"I'm the one asking the question here young man. Why on earth- If you think I'm helping you solicit Lily Evans then-"

James flushed, "No dad, I'm not trying to..." He let out a sigh, "Even if I was, Lily isn't the one that would show up anyway."

"She's not?" Fleamont frowned, "What do you mean she wouldn't show up? Who would?"

"Dad, I really can't explain that right now. I promise I don't have anything salacious planned it's

just... there's someone I need to talk to and I couldn't find another way of contacting them."

Fleamont shut his eyes with a sigh, "Did you ever consider sending an owl James?"

"He wouldn't respond to that."

"He?" Fleamont blinked and he paused again, "You mean he wouldn't willingly respond? I'm not helping you trap someone James."

"I'm not trapping him! I just want to talk, I swear. Once we've talked he can go, I won't try to stop him."

The older man's lips pursed together and James took a step closer, "Please dad."

He let out a sigh, "You're not going to harm or trap whoever this is. Give me your word James."

"I promise dad."

"Alright fine, but this is the one and only time I'm doing this." He shook his head, "Stand back."

James took a step back and his father cast the spell on him, swirling his wand in a circle clockwise as he said the spell.

"Desideria mea libera."

James glowed red for a second before the colour faded and he let out a sigh.

"Thanks dad."

"Don't make me regret this James."

James immediately ran up to his room. Two in the afternoon but he didn't see the point in waiting till night-time. He really just wanted to talk and it's a Sunday, Snape probably isn't doing anything too important right now.

He grabbed one of his bathroom robes and tossed it down on the chair beside the bed so Snape could put it on. It still hasn't completely registered that Snape is the one that appeared the last time, though if he's honest, after his talk with Remus the other day he can almost understand why. He's not a child anymore and looking back at his behaviour, thinking back at how he felt about the raven at the time, he's starting to realise exactly why Snape is the one that showed up on his bed. But he needed to talk to him actually talk this time. Hopefully Snape would let him.

James set his wand down on the dresser nearby. He didn't want to use it. He didn't want Snape thinking that this was some sort of trap.

He just wants to talk.

With one more deep breath, James reached out and touched his bed. There was a sharp pop and he looked up.

He thought he'd be prepared for what he'd find. He thought that seeing Snape naked and on his bed once was enough that it wouldn't be too much of a shock the next time.

James was wrong. So very very wrong.

Snape was on his bed, naked like last time only this time he was spread out over the bed, his head

tilting back, mouth open in soft gasp and his skin flushed all the way up to his hair and down to his shoulders. Last time when he tried to sneak a peek at Snape's length the raven had moved quickly to cover himself. Now it was completely exposed and... partially erect. But that, that wasn't even the worst thing. The absolute worst thing was how Snape's hands clenched in the sheets beneath him, he spread his legs open wider just a little bit and moaned breathlessly.

"Please."

James was shocked and then once he realised what was happening, he became enraged.

"WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?!"

Snape's eyes flew open and he sat up, those onyx eyes went wide when he saw James standing at the end of the bed gaping at him. The raven paled, James could almost see his cock begin to soften and he squirmed back against the bed.

"POTTER?!" He looked around himself looking very bewildered before some semblance of realisation seemed to dawn on him and he looked up at the other with a dark glare.

"You bastard! What the hell do you think you're doing?!"

"What am I doing? What the hell were you doing?! Were you with someone?!"

Snape's flush returned ever so slightly but he didn't stop glaring, "That is absolutely none of your business."

He moved down to the end of the bed, already reaching for the robe at the end of it but James grabbed a hold of his shoulder and shoved him back.

"Like hell it isn't! Who was it?!"

"Out of my way you, idiotic egotistical arse! I have nothing to say to you!"

James then grabbed a hold of Snape and shoved him back against the bed, pinning his wrists against the soft spread with one knee braced between the raven's legs.

"Who were you with?! Was it Remus?!"

Snape blinked, "What the devil are you- " The glare just came right back and he started struggling, "You know what I don't care. I don't give a damn about whatever this is or whatever, mental retardation you're going through! Let go of me this instant you psychotic twat!"

"Not until you tell me where you were!"

"I'm not telling you anything!"

"Yes you are!"

"Potter, if you don't unhand me this instant I'll--"

The door opened.

"James? James I heard shouting and I--" Fleamont stood in the doorway, wand already in hand only to blink at the scene in the room. James pinning a naked dark-haired man that he'd honestly never seen before to his bed. Both of the young men on the bed seemed to flush at the sight of him. Snape squirmed a bit, suddenly very aware of his state of undress.

“Oh my, it really isn’t Lily.” Fleamont cleared his throat and gave an awkward wave. “Hello, Fleamont Potter... I’m uh very surprised to meet you.”

“Dad.” James said though his blush was still burning, “We’re a little busy.”

“Oh uhm right, sorry for disturbing-“

“No! Don’t go!” Snape started struggling again. “He’s trying to force himself on me!”

Fleamont’s eyes went wide, “James!”

“I was not trying to force myself on-“ James looked down at the raven beneath him and glared, “Stop lying you stupid git! We both know that wasn’t what I was doing!”

“You’re detaining me against my own free will! I want to leave! Now let me go!”

“Why? So you can go back to whoever was shagging you before?!”

“That’s none of your-“

“Was it Malfoy?” James said quietly and Snape just blinked.

“What?”

“Was it Malfoy? I know that’s where you went last time! I saw how you were always around him in school.” James glared, “What Narcissa isn’t enough for him, he needs to keep his little whore nearby for an afternoon fuck?”

Snape almost gaped before he just sneered, “And what if he is? Jealous Potter? Is Lily not enough for you? You need to keep dragging me back into your warped little world for some more torture. What? Can’t get off unless you have a victim that you can torment and abuse?”

“Shut up! You know very well it’s not like that!”

“I don’t know and frankly I don’t care! Get your disgusting paws off of me!”

“No!”

“Potter!”

“ALRIGHT THAT’S ENOUGH!”

Fleamont suddenly boomed and both men looked over to the older grey-haired man in the door, who was rubbing a hand over his face before he lifted his gaze and tired hazel eyes went up to fix on him.

“James who is this?”

James swallowed hard, “Severus Snape.”

Fleamont paused, “Snape, you were in the prophet. Youngest wizard to ever become potions master.”

Snape paused, “Yes.”

“James, how do you know him?”

“We went to school together.”

Fleamont’s eyes widened, “Has this been going on since you were in school together?”

“Unfortunately.” Severus said bitterly and Fleamont let out a sigh.

“James, get Severus some clothes.”

“But, no! He can’t leave!”

“You cannot force me to stay here Potter!”

“You’re not going back to Malfoy.”

“I can do whatever I want.”

“Over my bloody body!”

“That can be arranged-“

“I SAID ENOUGH!”

They both went quiet again

“No one is leaving. You’re both coming downstairs and we’re sorting out this mess right now.”

“But-“

“Severus... well I suppose master Severus would be more appropriate. But I’d like to speak frankly with you. May I call you Severus?”

Snape paused almost frowning at the sincerity on the man’s face, “Yes.”

“Please, indulge me for just the day. James is my only son, I’d like the opportunity to fix... whatever this is. If not for James’ sake, then to at least make sure that he won’t bother you again.”

Snape let out a sigh, shut his eyes, “Fine.”

“Thank you.”

“James, let go of him. Get him some clothes and meet me downstairs.” Fleamont waved his wand around himself and muttered a spell, “To make sure we all stay right here, the Floo’s been disabled and the doors are locked. We are fixing this right now.”

Snape slumped into the bed just as Fleamont turned to leave the room.

“So you’re just fine with him calling you Severus?” James said and Severus glared.

“He hasn’t given me a reason to despise him yet. Other than spawning you of course.”

“You-“

“NO ARGUING!”

Ten minutes later they were all sitting in the dining room with Fleamont sitting at the head of the table with James and Severus sitting across from each other on either side of him. The raven was dressed in a long sleeve white shirt and dark jeans both of which were just a bit loose on him. He

had his arms folded across his chest onyx eyes glaring darkly at the nearest wall.

The fact that the raven was wearing his clothes was doing some awful things to James' brain.

So far they'd both been quiet. Fleamont let out a silent breath, unfortunately he has to change that.

"Now, I think the best way to start would be for James to explain exactly how he brought you here."

James' eyes snapped away to his father, "But dad--"

"Tell him, James."

Severus' eyes had narrowed and fixed on James, the other started to flush.

He cleared his throat.

"I used a spell."

"What kind of spell, James."

James sighed, "The birthday sex spell."

Severus' eyes filled with confusion, lips twisting ever so slightly, "What?"

Fleamont cleared his throat, "It's a spell in which you can summon a specific person to your bed with the intention of... engaging in sexual activities."

Severus' eyes went wide and then they narrowed into a dangerous glare, "That's why I was naked?"

"I--"

"I'm going to end your miserable life you--"

"What I think is important to note." Fleamont said cutting into Severus' threat, "Is that the charm has four specific rules. The first being that the person you're trying to summon, must first be someone you've known for at least three years. Someone that you've spoken to at least three times and someone you've--" Fleamont internally groaned, "I'll just say it, someone that you've masturbated to at least three times."

Severus sneered as he looked right at James, "You disgust me."

James sank into his chair a bit.

"The ultimate aim is to bring you the person that you most desire. Seeing as how you two don't seem to like each other very much, I'm not entirely sure how this all came about. So, Severus." Fleamont looked over to the raven who was still glaring at James, "James already said that you went to school together. He seems to have some affections for you--"

"No I--"

"However repressed those affections may be." Fleamont said clearly and James sank down even further into his chair. "You clearly don't like him very much. May I ask why?"

"Because he and his little friends have tormented and bullied me since the moment that we met--"

“We were not-“

“And when did you meet?”

“First year on the train.”

“First, the prophet said you’re twenty-one. Is that right?”

“Yes.”

Fleamont looked over to James sharply, “You were bullying this boy since the moment you met him James?!”

“I... Dad we weren’t-“

“What on earth for?”

“Apparently being sorted into Slytherin house is a crime worse than death.” Severus remarked snidely and Fleamont frowned.

“House rivalries? Really James? Your mother and I didn’t raise you like that.”

“I... it wasn’t just that he was in Slytherin! He was always reading all those books about the dark arts! And he was always around Malfoy’s lot! Dad you know the Malfoys are dark and there are all those rumours about the Death Eaters! All his friends were like that.”

“And that gives you the right to bully him?”

James mouth snapped shut, Fleamont shook his head. “Did any of your teachers know about what was going on?”

“All of them did.” Severus said bitterly, his hands clenched against his arms, “None of them cared. I was threatened with suspension multiple times for defending myself. I’d end up in the infirmary and all they received were a few meagre hours of detention.”

“James is this true?”

James said nothing. Fleamont sighed again. “Merlin.”

“I never meant for things to turn out that way you know.” James suddenly said, “I was never trying to hurt you.”

Severus just shook his head as he glared at the wall all over again.

“Right, since no sensible adult has ever thought to sit you all down and fix this mess. We’re going to do that right now. Remus and Sirius were involved in this?”

James’ jaw clenched, “Yes.”

“Then they need to be here as well.” Severus eyes snapped over to Fleamont, “I give you my word, none of them will harm you. Excuse me. No fighting.”

Fleamont got up and left the room Severus just continued to stare at the wall when James spoke, “I’m sorry Snape.”

Severus eyes flickered over to him, “I don’t want your apology Potter.”

“Well I’m giving it to you anyway. What I did was wrong, I was a brat and... I don’t even really know why I behaved that way. Dad’s right, I had no right or reason to. I’m sorry. The life debt Dumbledore made you promise to me-“

“Potter-“

“You don’t need to fulfil it, under the circumstances I don’t think it would be fair for you to have to.” James said sitting up a bit more Severus’ eyes narrowed down at him.

“Why did you bring me here?” he asked coldly, “If sex isn’t what you were after then why am I here?”

“I wanted to talk to you. Apologise.” James said quietly, “The first time, you showed up had been an accident... sort of. Sirius cast that spell on me the first time, I wasn’t expecting you, I thought I’d get-“

“Lily, were you trying to force her into your bed?”

“No-“

“That’s disgustingly low-“

“I didn’t think it’d actually work! Also, I was a little drunk.”

Severus rolled his eyes, his jaw clenched, “Lily and I are no longer friends-“

“I know-“

“But that doesn’t mean I don’t care for her.” He said quietly before looking up at James with a dark glare, “If you hurt or harm her in anyway, I will hunt you down and show you just how much of a Death Eater I can be.”

James tensed, that’s when his father walked into the room.

“Remus and Sirius should both be here soon.” The older man said settling back into his seat. “In the meantime, before they arrive I think we should discuss the fourth rule of the charm James used on you. The fourth rule dictates that the person you summon to your bed must be someone that has thought of you in a sexual way at least once. Severus, forgive me for being intrusive, but did you ever think of James in that way?”

The raven tensed, “Once and only once.”

“Really?” James blinked, he looked away and briefly licked his lips, “When exactly?”

“Sixth year.”

“Sixth year? But that’s the year that-“ James cut himself off and leaned over the table a little, “Really?”

“Yes.”

“But-“

“Your best mate had just tried to feed me to a werewolf and you ended up being the one to save me, forgive me for not being in the best state of mind at the time.” Severus growled.

“Oh...”

“Wait, fed you to a werewolf?” Fleamont looked at James again, “James please tell me you didn’t use Remus to try to prank this boy?”

“It wasn’t me! Sirius is the one that told him about the bleeding shack! I went out there to stop him!”

“Exactly why were we never informed of this?!”

“Dumbledore kept it quiet. He kept most of *their* transgressions quiet.” Severus said bitterly. He was saying a lot of things, speaking about things that he’d kept quiet for years. It just felt good. Potter’s father, Fleamont unlike most of the adults that have been around him was actually listening, paying attention. It felt good actually being heard.

Fleamont took yet another deep breath and slowly let it out, “Have there been any other near-death situations involving Severus, James?”

“No, not like that. He got hurt... multiple times but it was never that bad.”

“Of course because causing my cauldron to explode while brewing Draught of the Living Death is absolutely safe.”

“James-“

“Again, that was Sirius.” James said clearly, “I just... alright there was some bad stuff but nothing dangerous just sort of embarrassing, like second year.”

Severus visibly tensed Fleamont frowned, “Second year.”

James hesitated at the look on his father’s face, “I... well-“

“He hung me upside down and stripped me in front of the entire school.” Severus looked down at the table, “I ended up fighting with Lily, said some regrettable things and our friendship ended.”

“Why would you take his clothes off?”

“I-I don’t really know.” James admitted.

“And he was friends with Lily?”

“Yes.”

“And then they weren’t.”

“Yes.”

“After you and Lily started seeing each other in school, did you leave Severus alone?” Fleamont asked and James squirmed a bit uncomfortably.

“Not... exactly.”

“The pranks never stopped, they just got worse.” Severus said matter of factly and Fleamont looked back to his son.

“Now when the birthday sex spell is cast on you; Severus is the one that shows up in your bed?”

James frowned, “Well you saw-“

“James.” Fleamont let out a heavy sigh that suddenly turned into a laugh as he dragged a hand over his face, “Please tell me you weren’t tormenting this boy because you were in love with him.”

Severus looked over to James and frowned.

James felt a blush flood his cheeks before he could even try to stop it, “No! Of course not. I-“

“Why did you take his clothes off?”

“I told you I don’t know. I was twelve! He was twelve! Does it really matter?!”

Fleamont just watched his outburst silently, “The spell requires you to masturbate to someone at least three times. When was the first time you did that because of Severus, James?”

“I...” James’ mouth was opening and closing before he opened it again-

“Do not try to lie to me James.”

“I... don’t make me say it.” James said quietly.

“When?”

James went as red as a tomato, Severus arched a brow at him. He glanced up at the raven before letting out a sigh of frustration as he threw his hands in the air.

“First year.”

Severus visibly recoiled, James almost sputtered.

“I didn’t even know what I was doing alright!”

Severus’ lips twisted in disgust, “We were eleven! What were you even thinking about-“

“Your lips were pretty! And I felt... weird when I thought about the way you glared at me-“

“Enough, I do not want to hear this.”

“Merlin give me strength.” Fleamont said quietly and James shrank down when he remembered that his father was right there.

“Sorry, but-but, what about you?!”

“What about me?” Severus asked incredulously and James huffed folding his arms.

“After, well the thing with Remus what were you thinking about?”

Severus tensed, the barest hint of a hue flooding his cheeks. He let out a soft sigh.

“You’re stronger than I thought you would be. That’s all I’m going to say about it.”

James looked down at the table, “Oh.”

It was just then that a new voice spoke and drew their attention towards the doorway.

“Uncle Fleamont! James! Where are they?”

Severus tensed considerably and Fleamont immediately noticed with a frown he called back.

“In here!”

A few moments later.

“What’s wrong? You said it was an emergency.”

“Sit down, both of you.”

Sirius walked over and grabbed the chair right next to, “Who’s- SNIVELLUS?!”

The raven shut his eyes, his hands clenching against his arms.

“WHAT THE HELL-“

“SIRIUS! SIT DOWN AND BE QUIET!”

Fleamont said as he stood from his chair the Animagus paused.

“But he’s-“

“Sirius. Sit.”

The Animagus huffed as he purposefully walked around the table to sit on James’ left. Remus who had just stopped to stare at the scene walked over and sat down next to Severus. Fleamont sat down as well.

“Snape, its been a while.” He said trying for a smile Severus only gave him a cold look.

“Not long enough.”

Remus flinched a bit at the rejection. Sirius glared, “You’re still just the same miserable bastard aren’t you?”

Severus gave him a bored look, “And you still haven’t seemed to manage to grow a functioning brain, you worthless mutt.”

“You-“

“Enough!” Fleamont said sharply before fixing his gaze on Sirius, “Sirius did you try to use Remus to kill Severus?”

Both Remus and Sirius tensed, Sirius swallowed hard while Remus looked away.

“Uncle Fleamont-“

“This isn’t about you Remus, I doubt you would’ve approved of his actions. Answer me Sirius.”

Sirius looked over to James, “You told him?”

“Sirius, I won’t ask again.”

He paused, “I wasn’t trying to kill him.”

“And exactly what did you think would happen if you sent a human to a werewolf?”

"I... wasn't thinking."

"Small wonder."

Sirius glared at the raven Fleamont let out a sigh, "Severus."

"You're calling him by his name? What's going on here?"

"What's going on is that I just found out about what was happening between you and Severus since you started in school." Fleamont said looking Sirius right in the eye, "I hope you know I'm very dissappointed in you. In all of you, Euphemia would've been heartbroken."

Sirius flinched and sat back in his seat. Remus cringed and James' hand clenched.

Severus paused, "Who's Euphemia?"

"My late wife, she passed a few years ago." Fleamont said honestly and Severus paused.

"I-I'm sorry for your loss."

The older man gave him a slight smile, "I think she would've liked you. She loved brewing, never had the chance to get her mastery though."

It was quiet for a brief moment before Fleamont spoke, "Back to the task at hand. I've already spoken to James about his apparent issues with Severus. I brought you two here so you could sort out yours."

Sirius frowned, "Why?"

"Because this behaviour is unacceptable and it's incomprehensible that no one thought to try and fix it until now." Fleamont looked over to the werewolf.

"Remus, would you like to start?"

"With what?"

"What are your issues with Severus?"

"I don't have any issues with Sev-Snape." Remus quickly corrected himself when Severus gave him a sharp look, "I never pranked him. I never even hated him."

"No you just stood there and watched it happen. Even after you became a prefect." Severus said lowly and Fleamont sat up.

"Remus?"

Remus cringed before he let out a sigh, "I didn't want to lose my friends. Being a werewolf, it was so hard when I was younger and when I found people that didn't mind and accepted me, I just wanted to do whatever I could to keep them. I thought that if I stood up for you back then, they'd hate me for it and you didn't really seem like you'd be happy about getting help from anyone let alone me."

James almost gaped, Sirius frowned, "Moony, we would never--"

"When Peter tried to speak up and say that the way you hit Snape and he ended up in the hospital wing in third year was going too far, you threatened to kick him out Sirius."

“I didn-“

“He’s just a slimy snake, who cares about what happens to him? If you can’t even stomach that much Wormtail then maybe you shouldn’t be with us at all.” Remus said clearly mimicking Sirius and the Animagus pulled back.

“I didn’t mean it.”

“You never mean it Padfoot. That’s the problem. There was very long time where I wasn’t sure if I could really trust you. How could I stop you from picking on Snape, when you could just as easily tell everyone my secret?”

“We wouldn’t have done that.”

“Really, if I kept stopping you from hurting him. You wouldn’t have threatened to out me?” Remus said looking Sirius right in the eyes, “You loathed Snape Sirius, sometimes it seemed like it was more than James did.” then Remus sighed, “I know now that you wouldn’t do that. You’re my best friend and I’ll always appreciate you for that, but back then... we were kids and kids can be cruel. I was always afraid of when that cruelty would turn to me.”

Severus silently watched the exchange. Sirius sat back in his seat Remus then looked over to Severus and hesitated before, “I’m sorry Snape. I really am.”

“You’re a coward Lupin, but I can... Apology accepted.” Severus said quietly and Remus gave a small smile.

James looked up at him incredulously.

“Good.” Fleamont started, “Sirius.”

“What?”

“What are your issues with Severus?”

“He’s a smarmy bastard.”

“Sirius!”

“It’s true. Him and all his little friends, they’re all dark and evil the lot of them!” Sirius cried out. Severus just rolled his eyes hard. Fleamont sighed. He’s been doing that a lot today.

“Severus, do you have an interest in the Dark Arts?”

Severus looked up at the man, there was a kindness in his eyes and he couldn’t help but answer, “Yes.”

“SEE I TOLD YOU-“

“Sirius, one more outburst like that and I’ll cast a silencing spell on you.” He looked at Severus again, “Why?”

“What?”

“What do you find interesting about the Dark Arts?”

Severus glanced back at the marauders but chose to ignore them as he looked at the man,

“Everything. It’s fascinating and there are so many things that dark magic can do that light magic simply can’t. Most of it isn’t even violent and depraved, just different. I don’t see the point in ignoring one magical art in exchange for another.”

“It’s evil.” Sirius suddenly bit out Severus rolled his eyes again.

“Your friend is a werewolf, he’s classified as a dark creature, are you trying to say that he’s evil too?”

“No-“

“Then stop talking about things you don’t understand.”

Fleamont’s head gave a tilt, “You think there’s more to learn, Severus.”

“Yes.”

“Would you ever harm anyone, of your own free will?”

Severus glanced back at Sirius, “Perhaps.”

Sirius glared at him. Fleamont shook his head, “That’s not what I meant and I think you know that.”

Severus sighed, “No, not of my own free will.”

Fleamont nodded, “You know, we have a family friend. He got his Dark Arts Mastery many years ago. He’s always been interested in taking on someone he could assist in their mastery but whenever he takes submissions he’s often approached by some unsavoury types. It drove him into a bit of an isolation, most of his work now is in curse breaking. But I think he’d be very interested in meeting you. If you like I could have him contact you, it could be a great opportunity if you really want to learn more.”

Severus’ eyes went wide, “Really?”

“It wouldn’t be any trouble. And honestly I’d be doing Sebastian a favour he’s always wanted an apprentice.”

Severus couldn’t help but smile. James blinked at the way those onyx eyes warmed and his features softened. Something in his chest warmed just a bit.

“Thank you, Lord Potter.”

“Fleamont is perfectly fine. But he may not be pleased with your association with the Malfoys, you’ll need to stay away from them or a while. Would you be able to do that?”

Severus paused, biting his lip briefly, “Yes, absolutely.”

“I’ll owl him before the end of the afternoon.”

“You’re helping him?!” Sirius asked incredulously, “Uncle Fleamont he’s-“

“What do you know about dark magic Sirius?”

“It’s evil.”

“No not evil. Complex is a better way of putting it.” Fleamont explained, “Sebastian once told me; there are two types of people that can handle dark magic and therefore develop an interest in it. The first are those that are frankly, out of their minds. They have no care for their personal safety or the safety of others, they use violent emotion to force every spell and curse forward with reckless abandon. The second are those that have restraint, those intelligent enough to understand that dark magic demands respect, a very delicate touch. Absolute control. Now tell me Sirius and you as well James, does Severus seem insane to you?”

“Yes.”

“Sirius.”

The Animagus huffed, “No.”

James shook his head, “No.”

“So you were bullying a boy you barely even knew from the moment you met him, because?”

Sirius looked over to James, Fleamont interrupted, “I already know James’ reason Sirius. I want to know yours.”

“I...” He trailed off into silence.

“Was there ever a reason or was he just convenient because you thought you could get away with it?” Sirius still didn’t answer, “That behaviour is unacceptable Sirius. If someone treated Remus or James the way that you treated Severus would you find that acceptable?”

Sirius didn’t answer, but it didn’t seem like Fleamont expected him to. “I’m not going to ask you to apologise the way that Remus did. I doubt any apology you give right now would be even close to being sincere so I’ll only ask that this behaviour stops and you at least be civil with Severus.”

Sirius looked up, “Why does it even matter? Its not like he’ll be sticking around.”

Fleamont took a deep breath, “Severus, you remember what I told you about Sebastian, I’m assuming you’ll need to relocate for the time being?”

Severus nodded, before he spoke quietly. “Then you’ll stay here, until things get sorted out.”

All four gaped, Sirius was the first to speak.

“But-“

“My things are all-“

Fleamont cut him off, “We’ll provide you with anything you need. Including a new wand. Think of it as an apology from myself and my late wife for James and Sirius’ inexcusable behaviour.” He took one final deep breath, “Now, is there anything else that anyone would like to say?” all he got was silence and dark glaring from Sirius’ front towards Severus. “Well then, Severus, why don’t you follow me and I’ll show you to your room. We always have one prepared for unexpected guests.”

Severus blinked and almost hesitated but still stood when the older man stood and followed. “Uhm, alright.”

“I can have clothing and other such necessities delivered but you’ll have to go buy your wand

yourself.”

“I understand.”

They left the room still talking. It was quiet between the marauders at first until Sirius suddenly spoke.

“Why is he here James?”

James almost sighed at the other’s tone, “I brought him here.”

“You what?!”

“Again?” Remus asked with a knowing look and James flushed. Sirius looked between the two with wide eyes.

“What do you mean again?! This wasn’t the first time?! You knew about this Moony?!”

“Sirius calm down.”

“I will not calm down-“

“I used the spell.” James said loudly cutting into the Animagus’ rant before it could get started, “The birthday sex spell. I used it. I touched my bed and Snape is the one that appeared on my bed, not Lily.”

“Snape?”

“Yes Snape.”

“But... how?!”

James paused, “I fancy him... maybe?”

“Maybe?!”

“I don’t know Sirius, I’m just as confused as you are about all this but... if my Dad wants to help him then I’m not going to try and get in the way.”

“But-“

“He’s right you know, about the way we behaved and everything we did. There was no reason for it. Mum really would’ve been dissappointed if she found out.” James said quietly and Sirius’ mouth snapped shut, “So for my Dad’s sake at least, I’m not going to get in the way. I hope you won’t either.”

Sirius looked like he wanted to say something, his face was flushed with rage and his hand clenching against the table before he abruptly got up and left the room. James stood up as well.

“Sirius!”

“Let him go.” Remus said calmly, “Give him time to cool down.”

James huffed as he sank back into his seat, “This is not how I thought this would all go.”

Remus just watched him, lips pursing together in a tight line. “He was wearing your clothes.”

James looked up at that and Remus shrugged, “Full moon’s not far off. The clothes he’s wearing have your scent. He mentioned that he doesn’t have his wand. You used the charm to get him here again, didn’t you?”

“Yeah and?”

Remus rolled his eyes, “You realise that I was just teasing you James. We both know Snape would’ve found a way to kill me if I tried summoning him to my bed like that.”

James squirmed uncomfortably, “Of course I do.”

“Although... he certainly looks a bit different now, filled out a bit more. That’s good.” Remus leaned over towards Severus’ previously occupied seat, “Smells a little different, but mostly the same.”

James watched the wolf sniff the air beside him a bit more and he frowned, “What’re you doing?”

Remus then paused and flushed a bit, “Full moon’s close.”

“And?”

“And, let’s just say Moony never really forgot Snape’s scent.” Remus said and James’ frown deepened.

“When would he even have-“ James eyes filled with realisation, “No...”

“Calm down, it’s not what you’re thinking. Moony just doesn’t interact with many people that’s all. Besides you, Padfoot and Wormtail; Snape’s is the only other human scent he’s gotten up close. It’s just interesting smelling it after so long.”

“Oh.”

“I haven’t eaten since breakfast either, so I’m kind of starving. I keep hearing fresh meat over and over again in my head.”

“O.K.”

“Also it’s been a really long time since I got a shag so he does smell really good-“

“That’s enough!”

Remus let out a soft laugh, “Don’t worry, I’m just teasing. I wouldn’t try anything with Snape, not since you’ve finally decided to admit that you fancy him... maybe.”

James huffed, “I’m not sure how that helps at this point. He hates me.”

“Did you manage to ask him about the fourth rule of the charm?”

James let out a sigh, “He said it only happened once. After that night at the shack. Sounded to me like trauma sex or wanking or whatever.”

Remus cringed, “That’s not... great.”

“Didn’t even know what to say. Ended up sounding like a bit of a brat again.” James rubbed his hands over his face. “I don’t know what to do about him. I feel like I should... do something but, I don’t know what that is.”

Remus hummed, “Well, what are you going to do about Lily?”

James tensed, “Shit... I forgot about her.”

“Clearly.”

James pulled his hands away from his face, “You know what’s the absolute worst?”

“What?”

“I’m pretty sure Dad put him in the room across from mine. How am I going to sleep knowing that he’s right there?!”

“*Maybe fancying* him doesn’t mean you want to immediately jump his bones... Does it?”

James paused, “I don’t know.”

“Really James?”

“He showed up naked again. This time I could tell he was in the middle of shagging someone.”

Remus blinked, “Really?”

“He was flushed and very clearly turned on and he was moaning!” James huffed, “I was so pissed I almost jumped him right then and there.”

Remus scoffed, “That seems like weird reaction to being pissed James.”

“Do you think it was Malfoy? I think it was Malfoy, Snape didn’t even deny it. He just started accusing me of being some sort of monster that gets off on seeing him suffer.”

“I mean...”

James looked up at his friend, “Really Remmy?”

“Second year James.”

“We were twelve!”

“So you’re saying you didn’t get off on it afterwards?”

James lips pursed, “I’m not answering that question.”

Remus let out a startled laugh, “Really?! Since second year?”

“First.” James admitted sinking down into his seat and Remus laughed harder.

Chapter End Notes

A/N: Again, this one is discontinued. I doubt I’ll ever come back to it.

I had a lot of plans for it. I planned stuff with Sebastian and Lily and Voldemort but then I stopped because I somehow got to here and I was like “I don’t want to do this

anymore”

But I liked the idea, felt like sharing it. So here it is. I should really set up a thing where I can throw my plot bunnies so they don't bother me. I'll do that at some point. But this was fun, till I weirdly just decided to stop. I'm coming back for Flirting with Mr Hyde though. But I doubt I'll ever come back for Birthday Sex Charm.

Hope you enjoyed it either way.

End Notes

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